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Presidential Authoritarianism in the United States and Russia During the Metamodern Era

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Presidential Authoritarianism in the United States and Russia
During the Metamodern Era

by

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Dedication

This is dedicated to the men and women who prefer danger over disgrace.

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Abstract

This dissertation examined the public language of U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin to assess how they frame modern crises. Both the United States and Russia have experienced internal turmoil, social discord, political and economic instability, and international conflict since the termination of their hostilities three decades ago. Helming the presidential offices of these great powers, self-described strongmen Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin nostalgically promise to restore the lost glories of their respective countries while making mawkish appeals to tribal identities to build popular support for authoritarian tendencies and practices; preying on popular yearning for stability in a time of uncertainty. This oscillation between the past and future, occupying an uncomfortable and uncertain position, described as Metamodernism, has emerged as a response to the crises of the 21st century, magnified by the hyper-connection and subjectivities created by modern telecommunications technology. Using documentary content analysis of the public speeches and statements of Trump and Putin, this dissertation examined how the two leaders, proxies for the elites of their respective countries, framed the challenges of the Metamodern Era to advance their authoritarian political agendas. The study found that Trump represented deconstructive Metamodernism and Putin signified constructive Metamodernism; both processes to emplace an authoritarian state in either a democratic state or a fragile state. The findings in this research have implications for international relations theory, democracy research, and conflict resolution studies.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Emergence of the Metamodern Moment

For the United States, the 20th Century opened with a devastating and shocking terrorist attack by Al Qaeda in New York City and Washington D.C. that killed approximately 3,000 people, leaving both a physical scar at the scenes of the horror and a disfiguring psychological wound on the national spirit. The American government retaliated first with the invasion of Afghanistan to uproot the safe haven of Al Qaeda and then followed with the subjugation of Iraq, resulting in the destruction of Saddam Hussein's government and the obliteration of that country's internal peace and stability[1]. By the end of the first decade of the century, over one million people died during the War on Terrorism[2], the Great Recession threatened global economic stability, and tremendous social change in the United States, marked by the election of the country's first black president, intensified internal political conflict.

Simultaneously, Russia emerged from the chaos of the 1990s, impoverished and depleted by the collapse of the Soviet Union, as a more confident state power with international ambitions to restore its role as a leading global contender. Its president, a former secret police officer, Vladimir Putin, promised to strengthen the country by imposing internal order and confronting external enemies (Myers, 2016). Like the United States, Russia's start of the 20th Century also included war: an assault on the *de facto* independent Chechen Republic, a mountainous redoubt

[1] For more information regarding the 9/11 attacks, refer to the *9/11 Commission Report*, which examines in detail the events leading up to September 11, 2001, how the attack unfolded, and the American policy and military response. The commission concluded that 2,973 Americans were killed in the attack. As early as the evening of September 11, the National Security Council discussed military retaliation against Al Qaeda and those that harbored the organization, when then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recommended that the administration consider action against Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan, and Iran.
[2] Estimates vary about the total lives lost during the War on Terror. The Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University estimated that 480,000 to 507,000 people (including U.S military personnel, contractors, civilians, and opposition fighters, among others) were killed in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq between October 2001 and October 2018. In contrast, the Physicians for Social Responsibilty estimated that 1.3 million people were killed in those same three countries, with as many as one million Iraqis killed as early as 2008 (five years after the U.S. invasion).

of nationalist and Islamist fighters in the Caucasus region, as revenge for Russia's embarrassing military defeat in the prior decade. But the pretext for this war, a series of apartment bombings that killed hundreds of people, stirred controversy for the lingering suspicion that the Russian intelligence services, noted for their historical brutality and deceptions, planted the explosive devices themselves[3]. Nevertheless, as the decade continued, Putin consolidated control of the government by arresting and murdering political rivals, journalists, and dissidents, and launched further revanchist wars in Georgia and Ukraine, culminating in the country's isolation from the international community (Knight, 2017).

The first decade of the century, a period that at first mixed both promises for a so-called end of history and insecurities like Y2K, instead ushered in unexpected turmoil, conflict, and violence. Combined with the international turbulence and domestic disorder, the new century also introduced new technologies that connected people the world over like never before. Smart phones enabled people to consolidate many traditionally separate functions – like communication, photography, and the internet – into one handheld device while social media platforms globalized the world rapidly and irreversibly. These new tools of interconnectedness fostered cross-cultural communication, artisanal and commercial profit, and social and political revolutions. They provided a new, dynamic battlefield on which elites and grassroots movements engaged in decades-old wars of culture, identity, and politics. Alarmingly, they also enabled the

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[3] Yuri Felshtinsky and Alexander Litvinenko examined the apartment bombings and described them as a false flag operation by the Russian government in their book *Blowing Up Russia.* In September 1999, a succession of bombs exploded in four apartment buildings across Russia. After the first four attacks, an alert resident in the city of Ryazan observed suspicious men carrying bags into his apartment building's basement. After the local police responded, they discovered a cache of explosives wired to detonate. Within a day, the Russian police arrested the suspects, all of whom produced identity cards of the Federal Security Service (FSB). After their release, the FSB director claimed that the individuals had participated in an exercise to evaluate local responses. Litvinenko, a former FSB officer exiled in London, was assassinated by radiation poisoning in 2006. The Russian intelligence services, and their Soviet predecessors, have a long history of "active measures" that includes disinformation, political violence, and repression of civil society. Numerous works detail these activities, including Christopher Andrew's and Vasili Mitrokhin's *The Sword and the Shield.* Mitrokhin, the archivist for the KGB (the predecessor of the FSB), defected to the West with notes from the KGB's secret records.

widespread dissemination of fake news and extensive corporate and government surveillance tailor made for specific targeted segments of the population[4]. Forming the backdrop to Mankind's drama, the Earth itself appears to be within the throes of its own human-driven revolution, with climate change threatening to drastically disrupt the human condition.

Taken together, the revolutions and traumas in politics, society, technology, and the environment, all unfolding simultaneously and synergistically, represent the emergence of an era defined by new parameters and terms. Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker described Metamodernism as a "oscillation between a typically modern commitment and a markedly postmodern detachment." They continue that the "threefold threat of the credit crunch, a collapsed center, and climate change… infuses doubt, inspires reflection, and incites a move… out of the postmodern and into the metamodern" (2010). The simultaneous fragmentation of cultural and national identity combined with the collectivizing impulses of globalism produces a profound political and economic oscillation that embraces technological-commercial advancement while attempting to remain anchored to traditional values. The reinterpretation of customary principles to resolve modern social developments signifies the triumph of Metamodernism. This uneasy situation produces friction, both material and ideological, inviting ideologically promiscuous and apathetic elites to seize the mechanisms of power.

Even as Mankind collectively experiences unprecedented prosperity, a relatively long peace absent of global wars, and significantly longer life expectancies, challenges and crisis still cast dark shadows on the human condition. The principles that govern the interests of the

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[4] A 2016 New York Times article titled *Inside a Fake News Sausage Factory* described the economic structure and incentive for producing fake news. The subject of the article recognized an appetite for the outrageous headlines that he knew to be false, and so he continued to publish them, earning as much as $6,000 a month. In contrast, the U.S. intelligence community and the U.S. Congress identified the Internet Research Agency as a body directed by the Government of Russia to "reach significant numbers of Americans for purposes of interfering with the U.S. political system…" (2018).

inherently anti-democratic elite class do not fit easily with egalitarian practices and norms. The monopolization of the means of production, the hoarding of capital, and the expansion of police and intelligence powers – all part of the on-going metamodern revolution – undermine the principles at the heart of democratic governance. Necessarily, elitism requires policies and values that construct systems of exclusion. This includes, among other things, the implementation of stringent copyright laws, the use of complex highly lawyered legislation, and the extensive use of accounting and shadow banking schemes to evade tax obligations. It also includes the employment of lobbying and financing of think tanks and political influencers to shape political policy, the classification of information determined to be of national security interest, and the reliance on technocratic skills and credentials only awarded by elite organizations. This process builds a system of shadow power accessible only to those with the right credentials, the right skills, or the right relationships, and fundamentally reflects the continued presence of the old prerogative to seize and hold power even in a new era of uncertainity and change. This metamodern moment offers the elite class an opportunity to further consolidate power and maximize wealth while diminishing the rights of the common people.

The failure of old ideologies has opened an opportunity for the reinterpretation of traditional values and the assertion of power by demagogues and populists who appeal to social and national grievances. Challenges to the assumptions of capitalism and socialism, of globalism and nationalism, of cosmopolitanism and isolationism, have not produced promising solutions to modern problems, but have instead heightened international and domestic discord. These circumstances have in turn enabled the emergence of partisan firebrands who have embraced specific grievances to advance authoritarian political agendas. This anti-democratic authoritarian class simultaneously rejects modernity while seizing upon its technological capabilities to

promote a mythological ideology grounded in sectarian identity. In this way, this class has recycled historical prerogatives of power for the 21st Century.

This research required an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the views and behaviors of the metamodern elite, and asked, using the examples of the United States and Russia, what the metamodern future might look like.

Research Question

The research question investigated, through documentary content analysis, the influences of Metamodernism upon the speeches and policies of U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The research question was:-

In what ways do the speeches of the Trump administration of the United States and the Putin administration of Russia reflect Metamodernism (e.g. can either president be defined as 'metamodern')?

Chapter Conclusion

The next four chapters detail the course and findings of the examination in response to the research question. Chapter 2, the literature review, discusses the emergence of a Metamodern world by tracing its history from modern through the post-modern and finally to the present. It also discusses other significant theoretical frameworks for understanding nationalism, the state, and elite theory. Chapter 3 explains the research method selected for this research: comparative content analysis. This approach provides the tools necessary to properly frame the language used by Presidents Trump and Putin to place them within the Metamodern context. Chapter 4 highlights the findings and results of the study, providing a coded framework for the language used by the subjects of the case study. Lastly, Chapter 5 suggests further research, including the development of a potential typology for Metamodern presidents.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Towards a Metamodern World

As described in the previous chapter, Metamodernism represents a collision between old and new, conservative and progressive, with a contradictory desire and rejection of both. It does not cut neatly across political or ideological boundaries, but instead contends with old problems under new conditions, often aggravated by crisis. At its core, it suggests an inherent human longing for stability (represented in large part by the embrace of 'traditional' values) while also recognizing humanity's own acknowledgement, even if subconsciously, that an ideal historical past probably never existed in the first place.

Signals of the Metamodern Era

Among the "ten basic principles of Metamodernism" identified by professor Seth Abramson, "the collapse of distances" and "multiple subjectivities" fit prominently. According to Abramson, the "simultaneous anonymity and false intimacy of the Internet… makes it harder to… distinguish what we could or do believe from what others believe." This causes a "swirl of identity and belief we only sometimes… control." The collapse of distances facilities multiple subjectivities because "we often find ourselves joining our words and actions with people we know nothing about – except that they agree with us as to the issue we're discussing in the moment." This allows people to "switch subjective positions as feels emotionally and/or logistically appropriate, tune out subjectivities temporarily… or create entirely new subjectivities that have more meaning…" (2015). A cynical elite, focused on the singular aim of consolidating power and equipped with the instruments of state and technology, can exploit this feature of Metamodernism for its own ends. This elite can substitute traditional "ideological anchorage"

with its own narratives and subjectivities, and, because of the collapse of distances, tailor it for specific targeted demographics and deliver it in real-time.

In a separate article, Abramson added five more principles of Metamodernism, including "reconstruction instead of deconstruction" and "walllessness and borderlessness". As will be seen later, this process also contrasts with the exclusionary nature of nationalism and elitism. Metamodernism permits a reconstruction into a "unified whole that can't easily be deconstructed into its parts" (2015). Navigating the intimate spaces of collapsed distances between multiple subjectivities requires constant engagement between apparently contradictory compulsions. This necessarily abolishes walls and borders, sometimes at great cost, and appropriating them for new purposes not imagined by the original creators. Within this context, organized political power can mobilize the creation (and reconstruction) of narratives. Political elites and state actors employing social media tools and a complex, opaque web of patronage and financial networks can develop and deploy targeted narratives to individual households and communication devices.

Recognizing the intensifying contradictions of emerging trends, Luke Turner's Metamodernist Manifesto recommended a "pragmatic romanticism unhindered by ideological anchorage" (2011). This yearning has manifested itself in Donald Trump's presidential campaign slogan "Make America Great Again" and Vladimir Putin's frequent ruminations about the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Both men have capitalized on the anxiety produced by the friction created between the collision of modern economics and politics with traditional values. Both Presidents have also demonstrated a remarkably distant relationship with ideological principles that speak to a belief in a more fundamental truth. In this sense, metamodern leaders pursuing a "pragmatic romanticism" simultaneously use articulable methods while pursuing nostalgic ideals that may never have existed in reality. Unsurprisingly, the

detachment from "ideological anchorage" corresponds with the emergence of fake news, massive state-directed disinformation campaigns, climate change denial, and the populist rejection of expertise. Paradoxically, their efforts to rebuild walls (in some cases, physically) around arbitrarily drawn boundaries of identity reflect an apparent Metamodern impulse to simultaneously collapse distances between homogeneous contingents while creating space from an unrecognizable Other. Both Trump and Putin selectively re-draw boundaries to form coalitions supportive of their agenda, with Trump specifically attempting to create synergistic allegiences across diverse, even contradictory identities, centered on his person. In this way, walls and becomes become instruments and symbols themselves, rather than immutable features of social terrain. Even as this process compels intimacy among contingent identities both individually and collectively, it appears to also stimulate resistance.

The Origins of Metamodernism

Metamodernism's lineage can be traced back to modernism, which challenged the traditional hierarchies and power structures of the late 19th and 20th centuries, including religion, morality, and the state.

Modernism: from Skepsis to Dogma. Skepticism and nihilism initially defined modernism. German philosopher Fredrich Nietzsche set forth the epistemological principles that would ultimately come to characterize modernism, which could fundamentally be summarized by his statement that "there are no facts, only interpretations" (1977). This simple statement challenged both the conservative and liberal philosophical principles of the time; the first asserting that values originated from God (or some other higher power), and the second that values were inherent in mankind. Nietzsche's oft misunderstood claim that "God is dead" (1887) referred to his belief that God, as a source of moral validation and values, no longer existed.

Further, his commentary that "we do not believe in a right that does not proceed from a power which is able to uphold it… we regard all rights as conquests" (2016) also challenged liberal values holding the inherency of individual worth.

Nietzsche did not just confront theological doctrine, but also questioned the ability for people to know anything at all, asking "what does man actually know about himself?" (1873). This line of inquiry began the separation between the material and the symbols that represent them, as he further asked, "Are designations congruent with things? Is language the adequate expression of all realities?" (1873). He recognized the importance of the separation, stating that, "We obtain the concept… by overlooking what is individual and actual…" (1873). This initial perception of divergence between the material and the epistemological would have long-term consequences. People, he claimed, had no inherent concern about "pure knowledge", but instead were "hostilely inclined" against "those truths which are possibly harmful and destructive…" (1873). This perception made truth's value contingent on perspective, decoupling it from a central authority such as God or the state.

For the purposes of this examination, Nietzsche also expressed cynicism about the state, asserting that the state is "the coldest of all cold monsters" (2008). He further declared that "the state lieth in all languages… whatever it saith it lieth… whatever it hath it hath stolen" (2008). This challenge to the state's legitimacy as a central component of human activity and values would manifest itself later in postmodernism and Metamodernism.

Another prominent philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, continued with the criticism about the origin of morality claiming that "everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist… he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself…" (1989). He further asserted that "justice is a human issue, and I do not need a god to teach it to me" (1943). But

Sartre also departed from Nietzsche's apparent nihilism, claiming that "we will freedom for freedom's sake… I cannot make liberty my aim unless I make that of others equally my aim" (1946).

The disposal of institutional sanctities such as God and the state permeated through the thoughts of other thinkers. Gilles Deleuze stated that "there is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons" (1990). Paul Valery warned that "If the state is strong, it crushes us. If it is weak, we perish." (1971). Gyorgy Luckacs recognized that "history is precisely the history of… institutions…" which "start by controlling economic relationships between men and on to permeate all human relations…" (1968).

The words of Max Horkheimer perhaps best summarize the position of modernists. He stated that "the concept of God was for a long time the place where the idea was kept alive that there are other norms besides those to which nature and society give expression…" (1995), recognizing God not as a source of morality, but instead as a symbol of it. But this also meant that people had to surrender the laws of men, stating "whoever desires to live among men has to obey their laws, the basis for "secular morality" in the West, and consequently "rationality… of such obedience swallows up everything, even the freedom to think" (1941). Thus, even the state becomes separated from material reality, as it enforces the laws of men. This results in a structure in which a man's worth "must be certified by special social circumstances stipulated in documents" (1937) and where "there is no theoretical obstacle" to the idea that dictatorship is good is "rationally valid" for its beneficiaries (2013). In summary, neither God or state provide legitimacy, nor does it derive internally, but it instead emerges from human action.

The thinkers above, from Nietzsche to Horkheimer, deconstructed the traditional institutions of God and state, and replaced them with larger narratives about human behavior and

a general skepticism. Modernism's initial deconstructionism would combine with doubts about its universality to fuel postmodernism.

The Alternative Illusions of Postmodernism. Metamodernism emerged as a response to postmodernism, itself a rejection of modernism. Deconstructionist at its core, post-modernism challenged the universalist narratives of a modern world built on the Enlightenment (and Western) ideals of scientific process, rational decision-making, and objectivity. Instead, postmodernism situated these claims within socially, economically, and politically contingent parameters that often proved internally contradictory. Predictably, postmodernism emerged and gained strength in the aftermath of the titanic ideological struggle of the Second World War and during the collapse of centuries-old European colonial empires built on world-spanning mythologies of Western superiority. The internal contradictions of Enlightenment ideology reached their apex with democratic capitalism, fascism, and communism, all theoretically grounded in ideas of rationality, science, and absolute truths that prounced universal application. Thus, postmodernism created the epistemological breach through which charged Metamodernism.

Martin Heidegger predicted the clash of subjectivities that fit so prominently in the metamodern construct. In The Question Concerning Technology, he claimed that "the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture", a situation where "the structured image" man produces for the "calculating, planning, and molding of all things" is cultivated for a "struggle of world views" (1954). Michael Foucault continued this extrapolation in the History of Sexuality, where he describes "a conception of power which replaces the privilege of the law with the viewpoint of the objective, the privilege of prohibition with the viewpoint of tactical efficacy, the privilege of sovereignty with the analysis of a multiple and

mobile field of force relations wherein… effects of domination are produced" (1976). In other words, the frames and constructs themselves become tools in a struggle for power. Jean-Francois Lyotard underlies this fracturing of the old global order in The Postmodern Condition by describing a "crisis of scientific knowledge" that "represents… an internal erosion of the legitimacy principle of knowledge" and that, as a result, "disciplines disappear, overlappings occur… between sciences, and from these new territories are born," which ultimately "gives way to an immanent… network of areas of inquiry, the respective frontiers of which are in constant flux" (1979). Heidegger, Foucault, and Lyotard all describe a process in which fixed narratives collapse and give way to unanchored, tactically useful, and targeted subjectivities; in a sense, a diffusion of centralized power.

Carving away the epistemological foundations of modernity, post-modernism embraced pluralism and subjectivity as an alternate structure of placing frames and references. In The Writing and Difference, Jacques Derrida stated that "in the absence of a center or origin, everything becomes discourse" and that "the absence of a transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely" (1966). Without a defined center tethering the structure, the structure itself becomes boundless, and therefore bounds together all of the contradictory impulses and behavior. Derrida continues by stating that "it is a question of explicitly and systematically posing the problem of the status of a discourse which borrows from a heritage the resources necessary for [its] deconstruction… a problem of economy and strategy" (1966). Navigating this philosophical wilderness does not rely upon rational arguments competing in a marketplace of ideas, itself an Enlightenment paradigm, but instead upon maneuvering within the recognized parameters of the structure and breaking them.

Jean Baudrillard also reflected on this phenomenon in Simulacra and Simulation, positing that the distance of symbols from their original meaning masked an underlying truth, and no longer reflected reality to any meaningful extent. This distance created a situation in which "the real is no longer what it used to be," inviting a "proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity, and authenticity" (1983).

Postmodernism impacted the West broadly, and the United States specifically. As the preeminent superpower, America's cultural and social product throughout the Cold War shaped the developments contained within the broader system of globalization. The international system adopted America's principles and customs, and therefore the country came to define the global center against which all other forms were measured. Thus, the impact of postmodernism, and subsequently Metamodernism, on the United States had international consequences. Donald Wood argued in the Unraveling of the West: Postmodernism and the Decline of Democracy that the extremist skepticism, criticism, and subjectivities of postmodernism has undermined the foundations of Western democracy. Abandoning the principles of the Enlightenment, chief among them reason, Western society has surrendered to tribalism and demagoguery (2003). Theda Skocpol, in The States and Social Revolutions, argued that "the state is… fundamentally Janus-faced, with an intrinsically dual anchorage in class-divided socioeconomic structures and an international system of states" where "state executives… will be found maneuvering to extract resources and build administrative and coercive organizations" (1979). In this sense, post-modernism both recognized and accelerated the erosion of Western values by breaking the grand narratives that bound together liberal societies and rendering unto each their own subjectivity. Within this complex process, atomized actors, particularly elites, seek out their self interest.

Russia: Simulations of State and Identity

Given the postmodern fixation on simulation and representation, Russia may be said to be a post-modern polity in practice. It has long oscillated between Europe and Asia, autocracy and democracy, and spiritualism and materialism. In this experience, it has formulated constructions of its own, creating reproductions of Western creations. Anatoly Chernyaev, writing in Continuity and Succession in Contemporary Russian Philosophy, argued that postmodernism, in the Western sense, found a "fertile soil in Russia" because the country's "intellectual elites have always… [heeded] the latest word of Western wisdom" and that "Russian thought has always been closely associated with aesthetics." Russian philosophy, "in constant dialogue with relevant orientations of Western thought", developed a "national style of its own" (2014).

But more fundamentally, this national style, described by Evgeny Dobrenko in Utopias of Return, remained firmly "in the realm of representation, utterly distracted by [Russia's] own thwarted identity complex." In yearning to join the European community, Russia simulated universalized ideas and mechanics, but never actually embraced them; "split between the reality of its own powerlessness and poverty, and the myth of its greatness." Dobrenko continued by claiming that "one might say that the tradition of simulating 'civilization' is the defining factor of Russian history…" (2011). Russia did not embrace postmodernism as much as simulated it, as it did with socialism and democracy.

Mikhail Ephstein, in After the Future: the Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture (1995), described Russia's machinations further. He posited that, in part, Russia experienced a form of postmodernism predating its actual development in the West: "the production of reality… has been routinely accomplished throughout all of Russian history" (p. 191). The various institutions of Russian society did not develop organically, but

instead the state "implanted [them] from above in the form of smoothly whittled twigs in the hopes they might take root…", creating a "civilization composed entirely of names" (pp. 191 – 192). Unsurprisingly then, Russia gave birth to the term "Potemkin village", a polished presentation divorced from reality. The Marquis de Custine, after visiting Russia in 1839, famously described the country in Letters from Russia as a "country of fictions", "an empire of catalogues", and a place where "words matter more than reality" (2014).

The collapse of the Soviet Union, perhaps a master simulation experiment in its own right, having mashed together disparate classes and nationalities in an autocratic system presenting itself as liberating and democratic, had a significant impact on Russian culture and identity. Russia's territorial expansionism, an internal form of settler-colonization, had a similar impact on the country's identity and discourse. Mass population expulsions, transfers, and repressions during the 20th century under Joseph Stalin represented the height of this form of colonialism, only for the Soviet system to collapse sixty years later, leaving a traumatic legacy that Russian culture has had difficulty addressing. It has also led to numerous conflicts between Russia and its former subjects, including Georgia and Ukraine. Vitaly Chernetsky, in Mapping Postcommunist Cultures, called the Russian center the "metropoly", and it's the fragmentation of this Russian imperial polity that has so thoroughly shaken Russian society (2007).

Here returns Dobrenko, who argued that Russia's history consists of overcoming trauma with façade, with postmodernism as a process to overcome the Stalinist trauma that echoes into the present day (2011). He stated that "this time around, the country is entering the 'European house' by simulating a 'market economy', 'democracy', and 'postmodernism'" but that Russia has not fundamentally changed. Thus, Russia's self-image becomes one in which "how you wish to be seen is how you wish to be in reality", constituting "the last and strongest thread connecting

today's Russia with its history;" one that "can be reduced to a chain of leaps forward in an endless process…" (2011). In this context, Russia, insecure and malleable, beset by trauma, becomes vulnerable to Metamodernism's promise of the reconstruction of identities in a space between spaces.

Both the United States and Russia entered the 21st Century uncertain about their respective destinies and their own national identities. Faced by trauma, potential disintegration, and social unrest, each witnessed the deconstruction of their greatest symbols by terrorism, economic crisis, and or political disintegration.

United in Delusion: State, Nation, and Nationalism

The state has emerged as the basic unit in the global political order. Various theories provide critical analysis about the function and legitimacy of the state, and the ways in which it influences, or is influenced by, other factors such as economics, social and cultural values, and individual and bureaucratic preferences. Within the context of Metamodernism, these theories help explain the context and contours of unfolding crises.

The Foundations of the State

Although multiple theories exist explaining state formation and functions, two of them, pluralism and Marxism, provide the most relevant descriptions for the purposes of this examination. Whereas pluralists articulate a vision of politics and state power contingent on transitory issues, interests, and groups, Marxism advances a theory based upon structures of power determined by the collision of classes in material-economic processes. A quick review of political theories of the state places Metamodernism in a contemporary context.

Pluralism: The State as Contract. Pluralism principally characterizes the state as a form of social contract; a political unit formed for the purposes of collective action and the resolution

of conflict between individuals or communities. In The Prince, Niccolo Machiavelli articulated a vision of state practice resembling a contract: "well-ordered states and wise princes have taken every care to… keep the people satisfied and contended, for this is one of the most important objects a prince can have." He further described "good laws" as one of the "chief foundations" of states (1513). Famously, John Locke, writing in the Second Treatise of Government, articulated a similar conception of statehood, asserting that "no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions (1689). These individuals, among others, initiated the pluralist tradition framing the state as the result of mutual agreement among society's members who share obligations toward one another.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau provided a more formulaic description, explicitly describing a "society contract" through which "man… gains… civil liberty." He continued by asserting that "it is solely on the basis of… common interest that every should be governed." He warned that "it is therefore essential… that there should be no partial society within the State… but if there are partial societies, it is best to have as many as possible and to prevent them from being unequal" (1762). These ideas advocated a form of participatory democracy in which the state's stakeholders could not impose tyranny or injustice on each other.

Locke and Rousseau responded to an idea of a so-called 'state of nature', where the strong dominated the weak, and the 'laws' of nature as such governed the relationship between people before the emergence of the state. In the Leviathan (1651), British philosopher Thomas Hobbes described the state of nature as a "war of every one against every one" where "every man has a right to every thing, even to another's body." To extract oneself from this situation, Hobbes argued, individuals form a state (a "commonwealth"), as "covenant" to protect their collective good. Hobbes does not argue for a republic, but instead a monarchial government to

which the majority consents to follow. Nevertheless, a social contract underlies this form of government with mutual obligations between the ruler and the ruled.

The realization of democratic governance, however imperfect, in the United States spurred additional ideas about building a pluralistic society. James Madison, writing in the Federalist Papers in defense of the new country's constitution, asserted that "the people are the only legitimate foundation of power… and it is from them that the constitutional charter… is derived." He also proclaimed that "justice is the end of government" (1788). The concern with justice as a purpose for the state became more prominent with the French Revolution, with Edmund Burke affirming that "justice is itself the great standing policy of civil society." He insisted that "society is, indeed, a contract… a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are to be born" (1790).

Contemporary political theorists formalized the ideas expressed by earlier writers and practitioners into an organized theory of pluralism. A selection of theorists relevant to this paper's discussion illustrate pluralism's focus on civil society and the state as contracts in which near-equal individuals and groups resolve their differences through agreed upon mechanicisms.

Nelson Polsby offered that "pluralists hold that power may be tied to issues, and issues can be fleeting or persistent, provoking coalitions… ranging in their duration from momentary to semi-permanent." He further described civil society as constituted of "hundreds of small 'special interest' groups, with incompletely overlapping memeberships, widely differing power bases, and a multitude of techniques for exercising influence on decisions…" (1960). Similarly, Elmer Eric Schattschneider described political parties in a democratic society as "merely an arrangement in which a large number of people co-operate for the accomplishment of certain common purposes" (1952). This position presupposes the existence of an underlying social

contract regulating the ways in which people relate to one another politically, and defining the acceptable methods that may be employed in pursuing political aims. Nevertheless, Polsby also recognized the tension likely to arise in a diverse, democratic society, emphasizing the importance of compromise (1985).

William Connolly continued developing this idea by ascribing structure to pluralism and recogning the subjectivities pressuring contemporary civic society. As early as 1994, he stated that "Pluralism… remains inattentative to… how every identity is indebted to intrasubjective and intersubjective differences through which it becomes… regulated… and it treats the overcoded border of the territorial state as the final boundary…" (pp. 12 -15). Recognizing the diversity of beliefs and identities in the current era, he advocated the "[construction of] a militant pluralist assemblage… of constituencies in multiple subject positions" that "will not all come from the same class or… creeds", but "come together out of growing concern for the fragility of things." He continued with his belief that "a multifaceted social movement… will come from energetic, creative, younger contingents…" (2015). Concerned with the construction of a unified movement in an increasingly de-centered and fractured political environment, he stated that, "deep pluralism… is an urgently needed alternative…" and with it the "demanding task… to embed an ethos of engagement in churches, families, schools, consumptions practices, media dramas, education, and state priorities" (2011). For this reason, Connolly supported a "democracy infused with a spirit of agonism" that contains "spaces for difference… established through… political contestation" (2001). Connolly envisioned a pluralistic society of different identity social contingents, a recognition of the problems of the metamodern era.

Marxism: The State as Instrument. In contrast to the pluralist vision of the state as a contract between competing but relatively equal individuals and groups within society, Marxism

recognized the state as an instrument reflecting the structure of power within a given society. For Marxist theorists, the state, specifically in capitalist countries, emerged as the vanguard of the bourgeous elite in protecting private property.

Karl Marx argued that the "emancipation of private property from the community" led to the "state [becoming] a separate entity, beside and ouside of civil society… nothing more than the form of organization… for the mutual guarantee of… property and interests" of the bourgeois. The emergence of the propertied class "[correspondend with] the modern state, which, purchased gradually by the owners of property… has fallen entirely into their hands… and its existence has become wholly dependent" on the bourgeois' largess (1846). The shape and functions of the state arose from the organization of labor and capital in a historical materialist process. As a result, according to Marx, the "executive of the modern state is nothing but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoise" (1848).

Vladimir Lenin developed this theory further, asserting that the "state is a product and manifestation of the irreconcilability of class contradictions." Consequently, "the state arises where… class contradictions objectively cannot be reconciled" (1917). In other words, the functions and behavior of the state represent the interests and domination of one class over all others. The era of capitalism specifically "witnessed an unprecedented strengthening of the 'state machine" and an unprecendented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, in connection with the increase in repressive measures against the proletariat…" (1917).

The processes driving the dominance of the capitalist state culminated contemporaneously in a globalized world with the state subordinated to capital, and the removal of restrictions placed on the movement of capital and its owners. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri labelled this world order "Empire", in which "the center that supports globalization of

productive networks… [envelops] all power relations… and… deploys a powerful police function against the new barbarians…" They described "Empire" as an "apparatus of capture… a vampire regime of accumulated labor that survives only by sucking off the blood of the living" (2000). This process also created a "labor that produces immaterial products, such as information, knowledge, ideas, images, relationships…" whose "qualities and characteristics… [tend] to transform the other forms of labor and… society as a whole", creating "innumerable and indeterminate relationships of distributed networks" (2004). The emergent world-regime reflects the domination of the capital class, with the role of the state subordinated to the material compulsion for the expansion of capital's reach.

The state therefore remains one of the primary units of political action, and its mobilization during a time of crisis, such as those that define the metamodern era, has a direct bearing on the analysis of the American and Russian presidents.

The Mask of the Nation

Although both pluralist and Marxist theory suggest the evolution of a global superstructure, the persistence of nationalism, tied to political, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities (and intensified by the technological process of globalization), provides a layer of contingent subjectivity that produces inevitable conflict. Two important features of nationalism become important within the context of Metamodernism: first, that it simultaneously aligns and competes with the state as a political entity, and second, that it increases during times of crisis, which defines the metamodern period.

Ernest Gellner stated that nationalism "holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" in a system in which "atomized individuals [are] held together above all by a shared culture…" (2009). This culture can be defined by ethnic, religious, or political beliefs

and practices. In contrast, John Breuilly argued that elites mobilize nationalist sentiment in opposition to the state (1994). However, the pragmatic romanticism and multiple subjectivities described by Metamodernism reconciles these two opposing views of nationalism. National identity becomes a weapon in conflict and can be used to strengthen the state and to destroy it. Given the central role of the state, its combination with nationalism provides another framework for understsanding how societies and their leaders might respond to crisis.

Importantly for the purposes of this examination, nationalism increases in time of crisis. As noted by Jeffery Herbst, "people realize… that they are under threat because of who they are as a nation…" forcing a recognition "that it is only as a nation that can successfully defeat the threat" (2003). The various crises of the metamodern era – economic, cultural, environmental, and so on – pull upon nationalist identity as they threaten to undermine the perceived priveleges and status of nationalist units.

In this way, nationalism potentially becomes one vehicle of many around which people and elites can form identities and mobilize action.

The Elites of the Metamodern World

The three themes highlighted above – a world in crisis, the state as both contract and instrument for political action, and the intimacy of both conflict and the state with nationalist sentiment – provide context for understanding elite behavior.

America: An Iron Brotherhood. Elite theory has a long tradition in political science, dating back to C. Wright Mill's seminal work on the subject regarding America's political, economic, and social elite. In The Power Elite, he defined the contours of elite theory, stating that "the power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments…" since "they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences,"

owing to their "command of the major hierarchies and organizations of modern society… the big corporations… the machinery of the state… [and] the military establishment." Within the United States specifically, "major national power… resides in the economic, the political, and the military domains…" where "the means of power at the disposal of decision makers have increased enormously" (1956). In this approach, the elite derive their power from the positions they occupy, creating an instrumentalist elite dependent on the capabilities of the vast bureaucracies and administrations – economic, political, and military - under their authority.

G. William Domhoff offered a similar approach, arguing that the power elite dominate U.S. politics in a "corporate-conservative coalition" aided by "a wide variety of patriotic… and other single-issue organizations" that receive funding from "the corporate rich… and middle-class conservatives", allowing them to control the federal government through "interest-group and policy formulation processes" and "appointments to major government positions" (1967). Again, the elite derive their power from the positions they occupy in interlocking and reinforcing economic and political circles.

This view of elite theory has particular consequences for democratic governance; namely, the formulation of policies and resolution of internal conflicts. Dye argues that public policy is made from the top down, with the national elite defining the policies and policy-making process (2001). Similarly, Schattschneider described democracy as "competitive political system in which competing leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that the public can participate in the decision-making process" (1975). Both arguments propose a friction between elitism and pluralism, with most conflicts resolved in favor of the elite due to a combination of their resources, relationships, wealth, and organization. The elite themselves do not represent a monolithic whole, as argued by Robert Lerner and Althea Nagai, suggesting that

"strategic elites" better reflect a ruling class sometimes sharply divided on economic and social issues (1996). Neither do the elite simply occupy positions of governmental authority; Schwartz, in introducing The Structure of Power in America, speaks of the "business elite as a ruling class" because it "controls the places where many key public policies are decided: the boardrooms and executive suites of the major financial industrial corporations of America" (1987).

These interlocking relationships do not only appear in abstract class relationships, but also in very personal and individual instances. Individuals frequently move between government and the industries and corporations regulated by government action. This process of the "revolving door" not only produces "conflicts of interest and the possibility of corruption", but also may increase "favoritism, abuse of power, discriminatory treatment, lack of impartiality…" and can "[give] certain individuals privileged access to policymaking…" (Cerrillo-i-Martinez, 2017). This can potentially erode trust in democratic institutions and increase class antagonisms. Unsurprisingly, recognizing elite power in and out of government, several factors define elite dominance since the 1970s, including an increase in the "power and influence of multinational corporations," the "emergence of doctrines of the 'New Right'," and the "[assertion of] an extreme individualism" that "accepted… a gross commercialization of social life and the growth of inequality" (Bottomore, 1993).

In this evolution of elite power, at the confluence of an American identity crisis, international stagnation, and post-economic collapse, arrives an American businessman with outsized promises about restoring America's power. F. H. Buckley argues in Conservatism: Trump and Beyond that four themes elected Trump to the American presidency in 2016: mobility, jobs, religion, and nationalism; subjects the Republican establishment ignored (2018). Trump combined this appeal with, according to Edward Appel, "stridently divisive rhetorical

tactics" that evidence a powerful and "wrenching… break from settled presidential campaign norms" and it "underscores an intensity of rhetorical frame-shattering at minimum" with "near-explicable 'normalization' of Trump's vitriol, fabrication, and threatened mayhem" after the election (2018). Trump himself, Christian Fuchs argues, represents "possessive hyper-individualism" and an authoritarian leadership principle that presents itself as "populist, aggressive, attack-oriented, offensive…" which makes Trump's brand of "spectacle, showman" unpredictable when formulating government policy (2017). The features that define Trump's "rhetorical signature" include "spontaneous and unpredictable", "evidence flouting", "accountability dodging", and "institution disdaining" (Jamieson & Taussig, 2017). Connolly adds that Trump's speaking method "is not designed… to articulate a policy agenda" but to appeal to "dispersed anxieties and resentments about race, border issues, immigration…" (2017). Consequently, as part of the political climate during the Trump era, "racial and ethnic differences are now… more potent drivers of political division than any other demographic characteristics," with Trump heightening partisanship because of "his welcoming of white nationalists and hardline anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant voices into his coalition…" (Jacobson, 2017). Now President, Trump manages an unstable political "hybrid" between "populist devices to mobilize support, and an organized political coalition within his party with radically different priorities" (Pierson, 2017) while tormented by incensed and mobilized challengers to his agenda.

Trump therefore represents both the culmination of elite domination: a billionaire braggadocio without any notable meritocratic achievements suggesting competency at governance but that commands a devoutly loyal following that obeys him as he upends decades of elite consensus on topics as wide-ranging as international security and immigration. His words

and actions have invited back into the American sphere ideologies as diverse as isolationism and overt racism. Trump has arrived at America's metamodern moment.

Russia: A Special Kind of Brotherhood. Like the United States, Russia too faces a unique metamodern time. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the successor state, the Russian Federation, has undergone a tumultuous transformation from a socialist superpower to an authoritarian state-centered market economy. Even with the changes of names and faces, the country's internal organization and power dynamics remains remarkably similar to its predecessor.

In the decade following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced a wild transformation as a result of both Boris Yeltsin's management style and disagreements among the political elites that Yeltsin could not resolve. In the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, sharp disagreements between Westernizers and centrists forced the centrists to ally with nationalists and communists, setting the foundations for Russia's post-Soviet elite political conflict (Kullberg, 1994). Anne Clunan explained in The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence that the country's elite "shared an aspiration to retain the historical great power status" but "never settled… on a key element of national identity, the question of Russia's political purpose" (2009, p. 104). This created a "marked ambivalence" about Russia's identity in relation to the West with a focus on status maintenance as a great power (p. 105). Additionally, the transformation from socialism to a market economy led to the rise to power of oligarchs that controlled substantial parts of the economy, and with it, the concentration of wealth and the creation of extreme income inequality (Fidrmuc & Gundacker, 2017). The social and economic instability provided the opening for an assertive elite to claim the mantle of

leadership. Understanding the role of crisis in ushering in the meta-modern era, this experience also prepared the Russian polity for its arrival.

Vladimir Putin emerged as a champion that promised both stability and purpose. Allied with the power ministries and a close circle of compatriots from St. Petersburg, he embarked upon a campaign to subdue opposition to his presidency. In The Putin Principle, Karen Dawisha described a "kleptocratic tribute system underlying Russia's authoritarian regime" where "the state nationalizes the risk but privatizes the rewards to those closest to the president in return for their loyalty" (2015). Putin maintains control of Russia through "coercion and intimidation", murdering journalists, activities, and political opponents (Knight, 2017). Through these methods, he has managed to create a new, assertive Russian authoritarianism (Myers, 2016). Russia's "total interpenetration of business and politics" generates "informality, opacity, favouritism, and corruption," creating a system of "mainly oligarchic and autocratic components" expressed as "bureaucratic, plebiscitarian, and glamorous authoritarianism" (Mommsen, 2012).

Through the consolidation of the so-called 'power vertical', Putin has subordinated sub-national elites to his administration. The organization of the 'power vertical', instituted by Putin, "[embraced] state centralization as its major component" while also creating incentives for "subnational elite cooptation… inherent in electoral authoritarian regimes" (Golosov & Konstantinova, 2016). In Regional Elites in Contemporary Russia, Alla Chirikova explained that the construction of the power vertical "[turned] the relationship between center and regions… to one of hierarchical co-subordination." In this structure, the "economic infusions from the center are now (more) important… than the preservation of… political resources," making regional development "increasingly dependent on orders from the Kremlin" (2010). Chirikova further discussed the power vertical in The Power Vertical in the Assessments of Regional Elites, where

she asserts that "as the power vertical is consolidated, the [regional] governors are increasingly

becoming coordinators" (2010). In Regional Elites in Post-Soviet Russia, Badovskii and Shutov

described the "political and ideological orientation" of Russia's regional elites as "relatively

vague", and that ideological terms such as 'communist' and 'democrat' describe elite "affiliation

with a group that supports a specific person" instead of a "person's politico-ideological views"

(1997). In Russia, a "self-imposed consensus" exists as "a major tool for integration" of the

country's national elites, reinforced by the Kremlin's "attempts to restrain the political

autonomy" of independent actors, resulting in a "subordinate status" for the oligarchs (Gel'man,

2002). Nevertheless, wealthy regions have more bargaining power with the Russian 'center' than

do less wealthy regions (Panov & Ross, 2016).

Consequently, Putin has created a system with few internal ideological deviations, and

almost no difference in organization than its Soviet predecessor. Michael Burda, in Political Elite

of Modern Russia, described a process of elite formation that involves the selection of political

candidates by a narrow circle of senior government officials (2017).   All of Russia's elite

factions have a "statist or state-centered orientation" (Levada, 2010). Additionally, acccording to

Vladimir Gel'man in Party Politics in Russia: From Competition to Hierarchy, "all political

parties [have become] effectively controlled by the Kremlin" and the "major opposition parties

[became] extinct" (2008). Alina Dikikh, in The Party of Power in Russia, compared the functions

of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as a "severely gegemonist party" and United Russia

as a "moderately dominant party," concluding that the parties differ "not only in signs, but also

the type of political system," where United Russia's identity is not "full identification with the

state" (2014). Russia's predominant party, United Russia, "functions as an 'electoral

machine'… [performing] the functions of elite mobilization satisfactorily… because of the

incontestable authority of the 'Center'…" creating a party "from the top down" to "implement instructions from above… not for displaying initiative" or "working out a state policy course" (Makarenko, 2012). The major parties of Russia, including United Russia, "[treat] religion and/or spirituality as useful primarily in the creation of patriotic citizens" and "[confounded] spirituality with culture" (Papkova, 2007). With minor differences, the regional elites of post-Soviet Russia reflect the elites that governed Russia during the Soviet era (Moses, 2008). Subsequently, the "political elites… remain the principal barrier to Russia's democratic development" because they have "constructed a political system which effectively closed off entry to the mass of the populace and to civil society…" (Gill, 2002).

Whatever Russia's internal political organization, one continuity remains at the center of Russian elite power and behavior. Julie Anderson, in The Chekist Takeover of the Russian State, describes a polity thoroughly subordinated to the security services, especially the Federal Security Service (FSB). She claimed that the FSB, a successor to the Soviet Union's Committee for State Security (KGB), "has gained control of the country's political and economic sectors and exercises its power with a firm and ruthless hand…" having "effectively thwarted" Russia's transition to democracy (2006). Russian President Vladimir Putin served in the KGB and briefly led the FSB before becoming Prime Minister, then President. The FSB, allied with organized crime, has "[served] to only further consolidate the endemic corruption that permeates" the Russian power structure, making it an "oppressive, authoritarian regime composed mainly of career chekists" (2006). Russia's security services "remain locked in the past…" and the "closeness of high-ranking intelligence officials to the Kremlin… makes it difficult for Russian leaders to arrive at any independent assessment…" (Soldatov & Borogan, 2011). Captured by the

security services, the Russian state subordinates national identity and political purpose to the interests of the Chekist bureaucracy.

The question of how the great powers navigate the challenges of Metamodernism must necessarily address a rising, increasingly assertive China. Now entering the postmodern phase, China has yet to face the kind of crisis to usher in Metamodernism. It appears on the ascent and in contrast to both the United States and Russia, does not appear to have the misfortune of experiencing existential crisis in its immediate future. In his mapping of China's historical rise in Rising China and its Postmodern Fate, Charles Horner described a China now "rich and powerful… having created… riches and the power…" but that may have "planted… the seeds of its possible undoing" (p. 194, 2009). While China may eventually face such a crisis, it has yet to do so, and therefore it's experiences fall outside the scope of this research.

Reaching the Culminating Point of Conflict

International relations (IR) theory and democracy research provide a framework within which to assess the impact of Metamodernism on conflict and conflict resolution. Post-modernism, Two-Level Game Theory, and theories on authoritarianism and authority help situate the crises explained in the foregoing paragraphs. The following section discusses the fundamentals of these theories and their applicability to evaluating Metamodernism within the context of conflict resolution.

In evaluating the state, the basis of most IR theory, post-modernism examines violence, boundaries, and state identity, all features assumed inherent by traditional IR theories.

Richard Devetak (1996) argued that post-modernism within IR theory "seeks to address… [the] historical constitution and reconstitution [of the sovereign state] as the primary mode of subjectivity in world politics" which, at its core, means assessing "how [the state] is

naturalized and how it is made to appear as if it had an essence." (p. 172). Whereas traditional IR

theories accept violence as inherent and "normal" in international relations, Devetake suggests

that post-modernism supposes that "violence is… inaurguaral [and] augmentative" (p.173). This

means that violence does not only exist as an instrument of state, but also contributes to its

construction and shape.

Devetak continues that post-modernism's examination of state boundaries evaluates how

"a certain configuration of space and power [is] instituted" in the contenxt of "geography…

[produced by]… histories of struggle between competing authorities over the power to

organized, occupy, and administer space" (p. 175). This question has implications for "how

boundaries are constituted, what moral and political status they are accorded, and how they

operate simultaneously to include and exclude and how they… produce order and violence" (p.

176). Sovereignty therefore does not appear immaculately but instead manifests as the

provisional outcome of a continuous process of political and violent struggle.

Perhaps where post-modernist most significantly deviates from traditional IR, it suggests,

according to Devetak, that "political identity [has] been imposed by spatial practices… and [by]

a territorially-defined self… constructed in opposition to a threatening other" (p. 176). This

question requires an analysis of how "something which is different becomes conceptualized as a

threat or danger…" which ultimately demands the "[allocation] the other to an inferior moral

space, and to arrogate the self to a superior one" (p.178).

The combination of interrogative violence, spatial exclusion shaping political order as a

process of sovereignty, and the imposition of moral and political value on the basis of spatial

difference form the foundation of statecraft, or state behavior. Not only does this process define

acceptable and unacceptable behavior amongst states, but also has implications for how state's treat their populations, and what expectations populations may have their governments.

Understanding the state as process rather than as a monolithic actor informs understanding of Two-Level Game Theory. First introduced by Robert Putnam (1988), the theory suggests that negotiators balance domestic considerations and international calculations in a contingent mix of possible outcomes. In Putnam's original conception, the negotiator is an abstraction with assumed characteristics. But as explained in the previous sections of this chapter, the chief negotiators under examination (Trump and Putin) exercise power unique to them within a global system experiencing an inordinate amount of uncertainty and destablization. Given further the subjective nature of the state itself, not to mention its conception of security, the introduction of a power individual actor within a state's policy making apparatus raises questions about how states might select desirable outcomes and assess likely ones.

The strength of the individual actor within the political system, now understood to be a linked process at all levels, as well as the impact specifically on democratic governance, can be measured in part by several theories concerning authoritarianism and authority which place the individual at the center of an authoritarian political process.

In creating a typology of authoritarian regimes to assess their propensity for wars and political stability, Brian Lai and Dan Slater (2006) defined machine authoritarianism as a form of oligarchic-party governance in which a small elite holds depostic power ("who decides") and a political party exercises infrastructural power ("who executes"). They also defined "bossism" regimes as those also with a political party exercising infrastructural power but with an autocratic leader holding despotic power. As described in the foregoing chapters, both Trump and Putin

exercise some degree of authoritarian power or aspire to with the support of a party elite. Therefore defining the extent to which Trump and Putin fit into a measureable framework becomes necessary to understand how their aspirations and behavior has an impact on domestic and international conflict.

After nearly 20 years in the 21st Century, a century that opened with national and global crises and immense technological change, both the United States and Russia occupy a precarious position; not only in regard to their international stature, but also in regard to their national identities. Into this scene enters Donald Trump, promising to "make America great again", and Vladimir Putin, who promised much the same for Russia. Their political tactics, language, and aspirations reflect, at their core, metamodern presidencies.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Statement of Purpose

Through an inter-disciplinary approach using documentary analysis, this dissertation examined the pervasiveness of metamodern influences in the American and Russian elite as represented by their countries' respective presidents, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. Specifically, it aims to show the extent to which these leaders cite crisis as pretext, appeal to tribal identity to mobilize political power, and how they formulate and implement a response to the perceived threats.

Research Objectives

The research aimed to investigate, understand, and elaborate through discourse the views and beliefs of the metamodern elite by analyzing their proxies, the American and Russian presidents, to establish a coding framework based upon Metamodernism.

Research Method

The dissertation examined speeches, public statements, internal documents, biographies, and official policies and strategy documents of U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Specifically, it focused on Trump's discourse since the announcement of his bid for president in 2015, and on Putin's discourse since his assumption of high office in 1999, until the end of 2019.

This examination focused on the United States and Russia because of the weight of their political, economic, and cultural impact on international events, their recent experiences with crisis and instability, and their strongly held identities informed by long and rich histories. Additionally, for approximately the past century, American influence has ascended, making it the leading authority across many domains. In comparison, Russia has long strived for inclusion

as a world power, even as it seeks to define an identity of its own. As the leaders of these

countries, the words and actions of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin have substantial, long-

standing impacts not only on the immediate and material, but also on the long-term shape of

cultural norms and beliefs. These factors, as described in the literature review in more detail,

make both countries and their presidents ideal subjects for analysis.

A case study serves a useful purpose for this examination. According to Robert Yin

(2014), "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon… in

depth and within the real-world context…" (p.16). Additionally, a "case study inquiry copes with

the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than

data points…" (p.17). Assessing the impact of Metamodernism requires a distillation of

examined variables consistent with available and measurable data; in this investigation, the

speeches used by authoritarian presidents leading two world powers with substantial political,

economic, and cultural influence. Furthermore, according to Bill Gillham (2000), "qualitative

methods are essentially descriptive and inferential in character…" and enable the analyst to

"explore complexities that are beyond the scope of more controlled approaches" (p. 11). This

"[enables the analyst] to understand the meaning of what is going on" since "their great strength

is that they can illuminate issues and turn up possible explanations" (p. 11). In this way, case

studies address complex problems or relationships that cannot be easily reduced to manageable

and quantifiable variables. Consequently, the case study "is an intensive study of a single case or

a small number of cases which draws on observational data and promises to shed light on a

larger population of cases" (Gerring, 2017, p. 28). The appropriateness for the case study

approach for a complex multi-disciplinary subject as the examination of Metamodernism lies in

the requirement for the selection of a small number of cases, in this instance the United States

and Russia, through which to postulate about the larger impact of Metamodernism's development.

This examination uses the United States and Russia as different cases with similar results; although both countries possess international prominence and have experienced significant national trauma in the preceeding decades, they also have different traditions, values, and institutional behaviors. Nevertheless, both countries produced authoritarian political figures intending to reshape those traditions, values, and behaviors toward their apparent personal gain. Therefore, the selection of these two cases provides for consideration of how an ostensibly democratic society (the United States) and an authoritarian one (Russia) have come to a similar place, and what that place (metamodernist authoritarianism) looks like.

Further, Yin states that "in case study research," among the "five components of a research design [that] are especially important" are "the unit(s) of analysis" and "the logic of linking the data to the propositions" (p. 29). For this examination, content analysis forms the basis for constructing the units of analysis and analytical logic stipulated by Yin, and to make inferences about the effect(s) of Metamodernism on the presidencies of Trump and Putin. According to Klaus Krippendorff (2013), "content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences" (p. 18) and "requires a context within which the available texts are examined," as the "analyst must… construct a world in which the texts make sense" (p. 24). As described in the previous chapters, crisis forms the context of Metamodernism and the behaviors of the presidents of the United States and Russia. Moreover, content analysis requires the identification of "units… that analysts distinguish and treat as independent elements" within the text (p. 98). These units "emerge in processes of reading" and including "sampling units… that are distinguished for selective inclusion" in the analysis, while "recording/coding units… are

distinguished for separate description, transcription, recording, or coding" (pp. 99 – 100). The

identification of codes and themes enables the analyst to manipulate and engage with the text in a

meaningful way that surfaces the underlying significance of the words.

According to Mayring (2004), "the goal of [qualitative] content analysis is the systematic

examination of communicative material…" Although, this process started with quantitative

methods, Mayring identified several limitations, including that "the analysis ignored the textual

content that defined and modified the… textual units…" Among the qualitiative methods,

"structuring content analysis" required the "formal, content-focused typologizing" that "are then

subdivided into individual categories…". This system produces "coding rules [that]… result in a

coding guide" that eases "the task of structuring." This creates a controlled process for

evaluating content systematically.

Among the advantages of using qualitative content analysis within a case study, Florian

Kohlbacher (2006) cites "openness and ability to deal with complexity" and the "integration of

context". Because "qualitative content analysis takes a holistic and comprehensive approach

towards analyzing data…" it "achieves to… completely grasp and cover the complexity of the

social situations examined," enabling the analyst to "filter out the main points of analysis."

Further, because "context is… central to the interpretation and analysis of the material," content

analysis within the framework of a case study advances the aim to "achieve a holistic and

comprehensive analysis of complex social phenomena." Additionally, because a "major strength

of case study data collection is the use of multiple sources of evidence" since "the use of

multiple sources… allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and

behavioral issues," content analysis "offers a rule-based, theory guided method for analyzing"

content (Kohlbacher, 2006). The complexity of understanding Metamodernism, and how it

pervades through the words of world leaders socialized in distinct political and cultural environments requires a process that can account for these many variables without sacrificing the fundmental object. Within the case study framework, content analysis provides a useful tool to study Trump and Putin as proxies for the larger and unwieldly metamodern phenomenon.

Data Collection

The specific documents included campaign speeches, inauguration speeches, the American State of the Union Address, the Russian State of the Nation address to the Federal Assembly, the Russian president's annual news conference, and speeches given on special occasions, such as in response to national or international events and holidays, between 2000 (the political ascension of Putin) and 2019. It also included President Trump's tweets, which both he and his administration have claimed constitute official remarks. Transcripts of these speeches can be found on the website of the White House and the Kremlin. Typically, at these speeches, leaders detail their views, value systems, and intentions. They also generally have a broad audience and capture national and international attention, suggesting that the speaker will attempt to craft the most appealing message possible within the framework of their worldview. Therefore, these primary speeches likely best represent not only the worldviews but also what the leaders consider possible to accomplish given their perception of the challenges and opportunities. The same applies for Trump's tweets, through which Trump's views can reach millions of people.

The texts included 14 publicly-made speeches by Trump and and 17 speeches by Putin between 2000 and 2019. Additionally, it also analyzed 52 tweets made by Trump. Data collection ceased with the 2019 State of the Union speech given by President Trump and the 2018 Federal Assembly speech given by President Putin. The selected speeches represent a

substantial amount of the two presidents' public remarks, and therefore provide insight into the

ideological and political frames asserted by them. The examination explored the speeches and

tweets in totality with the categories, themes, and codes to be discussed. The selected speeches

and tweets met the following criteria for inclusion: prominent or significant statements delivered

by Trump or Putin to a public audience; delivered while the person held the presidential office or

formally pursued it; and reflected upon a matter of significant public interest such as identifying

the administration's agenda or policy. These specific texts form the center-piece of an

administration's communications to the public and therefore at their core represent the ways in

which they frame their priorities, agenda, and perception.

Analytical Procedure: the Emergence of a Coding Framework

Citing the documents produced by the Trump and Putin presidencies, the dissertation

used qualitative content analysis, as described above, to examine the documents for the themes

that pertain to the presidents' citation of crisis as pretext, the idealization of the past as utopia,

their appeal to tribal identity to mobilize political power, and how they formulate and implement

a response to the perceived threats. These themes emerge from the framework of

Metamodernism and technological evangelicalism, which asserts in part that crisis spurs identity

conflicts, and that amidst this tension, people oscillate between two poles. The table below

contains the following themes and categories used to examine the text. The themes and codes

identified emerge from understanding the context of both Metamodernism broadly, and

conditions within and around the United States and Russia specifically, as described in a

previous chapter. In other words through a deductive process, they emerge as an understanding

of the contexts that give meaning to the speeches analyzed by this investigation, as described by

the approach emphasized by Krippendorff. This dissertation tests the presence of

Metamodernism as represented by the terms contained in the table.

Table 1

Metamodernism as represented by terms

THEME	CATEGORY
CRISIS AS PRETEXT	Environmental Crisis
	Economic Crisis
	Political Crisis
	Security Crisis
	Cultural Crisis
THE PAST AS UTOPIA	Patriarchy
	Oligarchy
	Values
APPEAL TO TRIBAL IDENTITY	White Power
	The Other
RESPONSE	Autocracy
	Methodology
	Appeals

The centrality of crisis to the Metamodern Era places it at the forefront of this study.

Chapter 2 described in detail the nature of the crises faced by the United States and Russia; the

inclusion of several types of crises (environmental, economic, political, security, and cultural)

captures the broad extent to which crisis (or a sense thereof) afflicts both countries. Additionally,

as Metamodernism (partly) concerns itself with identify, the study therefore also explored the

characterization of the past as utopia and appeals to tribal identities. Specifically within the contexts of the United States and Russia, this includes an examination of elite power structures and those excluded from them. Lastly, the selected actors (Trump and Putin) respond to these crises and other pressures, and therefore this study also examines their language to gauge their response.

The subsequent analysis examined the extent to which Trump and Putin represent Metamodernism (and in which areas they may not). Schreier stated that "with qualitative analysis, the coding frame itself can be the main result" that "[presents] the frame" and "[illustrates] it through quotes".

Phillipp Mayring (2000) also suggested a deductive category application that "works with prior formulated, theoretical derived aspects of analysis" and "[brings] them in connection with the text." This consists of a "methodological controlled assignment of the category to a passage of text", similar to the themes and codes already described previously. "The main idea," according to Mayring, "is to give explicit definitions, examples and coding rules for each deductive category," which are "put together within a coding agenda." The rules suggested by Mayring provide a scientific-like basis establishing fundamental definitions to delineate boundaries between distinct concepts. This process protects against the danger of spillage between ideas that may eventually yield logical contradictions that could undermining the theoretical framework of the examination.

Comparing these two presidents also suggests by proxy the status of the elites, recognizing the heterogeneity among elite classes by identifying the conflict boundaries among them, in their respective countries, and the influence of Metamodernism generally. Among the differences between the United States and Russia, the organization of their governments, the

origins of domestic political power, and their driving ideological impulses may be the most interesting areas of divergence within the context of Metamodernism. As described in the previous chapter, America's government (perhaps best described as a plutocratic oligarchic republic) reflects the interests of an elite bound together through business and social relationships. Although these elites share many commonalities, there exists multiple centers of power which sometimes find themselves in conflict. In contrast, the so-called power vertical describes Russia's government, with decisions directed from the top down, with local party organizations acting as implementers of the center's will. Members of the security services (chekists), including Putin himself, hold the levers of power. Lastly, the United States has often received both acclaim and criticism as the philosophical center, defining, for better or worse, global frames for politics, economics, and culture. In contrast, Russia, as described in the preceding chapter, often attempts to mimic the West while seeking out a Russified vision of the object; whether it's democracy, industrialization, or philosophy. These differences may have a significant influence in the popularly desired direction of either country and have consequences for international security and prosperity.

Based on the discussion in the foregoing paragraph, a coding framework emerges that highlights the important textual units used by Trump and Putin. The following table illustrates how the identified codes fit into the larger framework.

Table 2

Identified codes fit into the larger framework

THEME	CATEGORY	CODES
CRISIS AS PRETEXT	Environmental Crisis	Climate Change Denialism
	Economic Crisis	Trade
		Immigration
		Living Standards
		Corruption
	Political Crisis	Delegitamization
		Conspiracy Theories
		Corruption
		Fake News
	Security Crisis	Terrorism
		International Security
		Global Competition
	Cultural Crisis	Racism & Race Relations
		Immigration
		Traditions
		Family Values
THE PAST AS UTOPIA	Patriarchy	N/A
		N/A
	Values	Historic Examples
APPEAL TO TRIBAL	White Power	Invasion

IDENTITY		Socialism
	The Other	Terrorism
		Exceptionalism
		Nationalism
RESPONSE	Autocracy	Absolute Rights
		Skepticism
	Methodology	N/A
	Appeals	The Base

The analysis used by this dissertation applies mixed models of content analysis by starting with deduced categories suggested by an understanding of the texts' context but moving through the content methodically to sharpen the provided categories, codes, and themes, and to identify new ones that may be of relevance. The tables above provided the "coding rules" and "coding guide" that eased the process of "structuring" the text, as suggested by Mayring (2004). Mayring (2000) also stated that using deductive categories can be "[brought]… in connection with the text" through "methodological… assignment of the category" to a part of the transcript. The analysis accomplished this by manually analyzing one document at a time with each review examing a document in totality to test the presence of each of the codes. The analysis assigned each code a color and highlighted the corresponding text to assist in creating meaningful units for review. This enabled greater analytical focus on the specific aspects of the texts that illustrated the presence of metamodernist themes. This also helped develop a thorough analysis of each document. The examination excluded language that did not fit into one of the above categories.

Notably, the selected texts did not include content for the cateogries of patriarchy and autocratic methodology. The absence of explicit commentary regarding these subjects does not rule out their presence in the values and beliefs of Trump or Putin (or the elites they represent), but instead suggests that the forum analyzed (public speeches) may not be conducive to such discussion.

Methodological Summary

This chapter discussed the research method, analytical procedures, data collection, and themes and codes used for this study. The examination used qualitative content analysis to test the presence of metamodernist themes within the specified texts. Chapter Four discusses in more detail the specific findings that emerged from the text and compares the language used by Trump and Putin.

Chapter 4: Results

The examination of Presidents Trump and Putin found that while both identified the

crises facing their respective countries and used them to advance their specific political agendas,

they did so in ways unique to their own character and views. Whereas Trump pursued a very

personal campaign, going so far as to reframe crisis to place him at their center, Putin articulated

a more conservative, but equally assertive, authoritarianism.

Crisis as Pretext

As described in Chapter Two, Metamodernism describes a struggle between old

difficulties and new circumstances aggravated by crisis. The War on Terrorism, political and

economic instability, climate change, and emerging technologies all represent emergencies

vulnerable to exploitation as pretext by opportunist political leaders. The following sections

describe instances in which Presidents Trump and Putin exploited crisis for political purposes.

Citing crisis – environmental, economic, political, security, and cultural - as pretext

served as a fundamental component of the speeches of both Trump and Putin. However, both

emphasized different categories of crisis, and within those categories, focused on various aspects

of them.

Environmental Crisis. Neither President Trump nor President Putin spoke extensively

of the environment in their selected speeches. However, Trump has engaged the subject of

climate change and the environment in his own way through Twitter since at least 2012. As early

as November 06, 2012, Trump now famously claimed that "the concept of global warming was

created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive"

(@realDonaldTrump). Trump treated the subject of the environment primarily by dismissing the

scientific consensus on climate change while also promoting his deregulation of environmental

policy as actually good for the environment. In this way, Trump used environmental crisis as a vehicle to target his political opponents and to promote his economic populism.

Trump's denial of climate change frames his views on the environment. On several occasions, Trump dismissed or mocked the idea of climate change, specifically global warming, by references to localized weather. On October 19, 2015, he stated that "it's really cold outside… Man, we could use a big fat dose of global warming!" Several years later, on December 28, 2017, he stated that "it could be the COLDEST New Year's Eve on record" [his emphasis], and that "perhaps we could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming…" In January 2019, Trump tweeted that "large parts of the Country are suffering from tremendous amounts of snow and near record setting cold" and that it "wouldn't be bad to have a little of that good old fashioned Global Warming right now!" (realDonaldTrump). Trump's mockery of concerns about climate change and the environment translated into attacks on his political opponents.

On August 18, 2015, Trump tweeted that he will "immediately approve the Keystone XL pipeline" and that it would have "no impact on environment" (@realDonaldTrump). Several months later on November 06, 2015, Trump tweeted on the same subject, stating that President Obama's rejection of the Keystone Pipeline was "sad" since the project would be "good for the environment" and had "no downside" (@realDonaldTrump). In contrast, the executive summary of the environmental impact statement for the project from the Department of State stated that the pipeline would "cross approximately 1,073 waterbodies," traverse within one mile 39 public water supply wells, potentially impact "13 federally protected or candidate species", and produce cardon dioxide equivalent emissions to "626,000 passenger vehicles operating for one year." Additionally, the project could expect a potential release, leak, or spill (U.S. Department of State, 2013). In addition to President Obama, Trump also ridiculed U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar,

observing that she was "talking proudly of fighting global warming while standing in a virtual blizzard of snow, ice and freezing temperatures" and that "she looked like a Snowman" (@realDonaldTrump). On September 04, 2019, Trump claimed that "the Democrats' destructive "environmental" proposals will raise your energy bill and prices at the pump," rhetorically asking, "don't the Democrats care about fighting American poverty?" (@realDonaldTrump).

Trump did not limit his political attacks to domestic opponents. He also derided the country of France, asking on March 16, 2019, "How is the Paris Environmental Accord working out for France… I guess not so well! In the meantime, the United States has gone to the top of all the lists on the Environment." He previously stated on December 08, 2018, that "the Paris Agreement isn't working out so well for Paris" because of the "protests and riots all over France" from "people [who] do not want to pay large sums of money… to maybe protect the environment" (@realDonaldTrump).

Even as he expressed climate change denialism and attacked his political opponents while using the environment as a bludgeon, President Trump paradoxically also tried to promote his own policies as good for the environment. He summarized his views on April 22, 2017 by stating that he is "committed to keeping our air and water clean" but that people should "always remember that economic growth enhances environmental protection" (@realDonaldTrump). Even as wildfires ravaged California in 2018, Trump claimed that the disasters were "magnified & made so much worse by the bad environmental laws" rather than climate change (@realDonaldTrump). The targeting of California continued in 2019 when the Trump administration moved to revoke California's federal waiver on vehicle emissions, the toughest standards in the country. Trump stated in September 2019 that his decision would "produce far less expensive cars for the consumer" while "older, highly polluting cars will be replaced by

extremely environmentally friendly cars" (@realDonaldTrump). Even as Trump dismantled the regulatory protections for the environment and ridiculed both U.S. and international remedies for climate problems, he still felt compelled to promote his policies within the frame of environmental protectionism, recognizing it as a (political) positive good.

In this way, President Trump turned environmental crisis to his political advantage, virtually ignoring contradictory scientific findings to mobilize popular support by attacking the rational environmental policies of his political opposition. Crisis in the Trump context did not mean climate change or global warming, but instead costly environmental regulations and political agreements that affected consumer prices and economic growth. When Trump did discuss environmental problems, he cited them as pretext for actions against his political opposition or for dismantling regulatory protections.

The environment, and the recognition of an environmental crisis, did not feature prominently in Putin's statements. Given Russia's long-time place as a net energy exporter with resources extraction industries as major sources of economic power, it should not be surprising that environmental concerns did not draw much attention from the government. As early as 2006, President Putin raised issues of the environment in the context of energy production and consumption, stating that it is a question of "environmental security and quality of life" (2006). He briefly raised environmental issues in his 2012 speech to the Federal Assembly, stating that "we should pay very close attention to environmental issues…" and use "high quality environmental standards of development" (2012). In his 2016 Federal Assembly speech, Putin made another brief reference to the environment, citing "environmental protection legislation" as an area where civil society should take an active part and declaring 2017 the "Year of the Environment". In 2018, he asserted that the government had "tightened environmental

requirements" to "reduce industrial pollution". This generally correlated with increasing

international alarm about climate change, suggesting a desire to resolve the structural tension

between Russia's economic power and shifting international priorities.

Unsurprisingly, the environment did not occupy a prominent role in Trump's speeches,

given his consistent denial about the dangers (and even existence) of climate change. To the

extent that Trump even discussed the environment, he framed it as about jobs and the economy.

Instead of addressing criticism about environmental hazards, he embraced controversial projects

like the Keystone Pipeline. He also famously once called climate change a hoax manufactured by

the Chinese to gain economic advantage over the United States. He further asserted that his

deregulatory policies would actually be good for the environment. Overall, Trump soundly

rejected any idea of a climate crisis occurring, even as parts of his political base in rural

communities suffer from its consequences. Instead, he reframed the idea of an environmental

crisis into a weapon to attack his political opponents on the economy and economic regulations.

For his part, Putin made little mention of the environment generally, and made no

specific references to an environmental crisis. Given Russia's economic dependence on energy

production and resource extraction, Putin's references to environmental regulation within the

context of economic development should not be surprising. To that extent that Putin mentioned

the environment at all, he did so only as part of larger conversations about instituting policies to

improve Russia's economic performance.

Economic Crisis. Both President Trump and President Putin spoke extensively about the

economy and economic problems facing their respective countries. While Putin struck a more

traditional and policy-oriented tone to address economic problems, Trump focused instead on

emphasizing economic crisis and converting it into political capital. For Trump, like the

environmental crisis, the economic crisis did not consist of the traditionally recognized

identification of the problem (e.g. economic inequality, recessionary cycles, etc), but instead on

the treatment of the U.S. in trade agreements and economic costs imposed on American business.

Trump frequently referenced jobs, taxes, and trade within the context of grievance.

When announcing his candidacy for the presidency on June 16, 2015, Trump almost

immediately invoked trade problems and economic crisis. He rhetorically asked about "the last

time anybody saw us beating… China in a trade deal" and lamented that the Japanese, in regard

to trade, "beat us all the time." In the same speech, Trump also claimed the unemployment

number to be "anywhere from 18 to 19 and maybe even 21 percent," asserting the official

statistic, 5.6%, to be "full of nonsense" (Peters & Woolley, 2015). This theme continued in

Trump's speech for accepting the nomination of the Republican Party, identifying "trade deals

that strip us of our jobs, and strip us of our wealth" as one of the largest political issues (Peters &

Wooley, 2016). His inauguration speech, noted for its cynicism, further pressed this claim,

claiming that America "made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of

our country has disappeared…" and that "factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a

thought about the millions upon millions of American workers left behind." He continued by

stating that "the wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then

redistributed across the entire world" (Peters & Woolley, 2017).

In his 2017 State of the Union speech, Trump explicitly tied U.S. economic fortunes with

immigration and criminal violence. He asserted that "protecting our workers also means

reforming our system of legal immigration," which currently "depresses wages for our poorest

workers and puts great pressure on taxpayers." He later claimed that to "break the cycle of

poverty, we must also break the cycle of violence," leading into an argument about supporting law enforcement and taking action against illegal immigration (White House, 2017).

Although Trump did not appeal to economic crisis in his 2018 State of the Union speech, and only made a passing reference to it in his 2019 State of the Union speech ("Another historic trade blunder was the catastrophe known as NAFTA" (White House, 2019), he frequently discussed economic problems on Twitter. Notably, prior to his election Trump lambasted President Obama and Democrats for a supposedly awful economy and trade agreements. After Trump's election, this rhetoric almost immediately shifted to claiming historic levels of economic performance.

In regard to trade, Trump tweeted on June 03, 2015, that "the Trans-Pacific Partnership will increase our trade deficits & send even more jobs overseas." Later that month, on June 27, he claimed that "only very stupid people think that the United States is making good trade deals with Mexico" and that "Mexico is killing us… at trade!" He also criticized economic performance, tweeting on April 30, 2016, that "the economy is bad and getting worse – almost ZERO growth this quarter" (@realDonaldTrump).

Trump included trade as one of the main subjects of his United Nations speech in 2018, stating that "the United States lost over 3 million manufacturing jobs… after China joined the [World Trade Organization]" and that America has accrued "$13 trillion in trade deficits…" (White House, 2018).

Trump's commentary across his speeches and tweets did not formulate any rationalized policy or scientifically grounded conclusions about causes, but instead focused on defining the parameters of an economic crisis politically convenient for himself. Trump blamed easily

identifiable economic enemies, like China and Mexico, and at times linked economic issues with cultural and political frictions, especially immigration.

In contrast to Trump, although President Putin extensively discussed economic problems facing his country, he did so in a logical, policy-focused, and somewhat boring way. He discussed many of the same issues as Trump but placed them rationally within a larger political program.

A few minutes into his speech to the Russian Federal Assembly in 2001, only the second since his election the previous year, Putin stated that "our people continue to have very low living standards" and that the country has "very serious economic and social risks." He also expressed concern for "worsening of a number of key economic indicators." Throughout the lengthy speech, he cited many problems, including the country's "unfavorable business climate," the comparatively small market value of Russia's largest private corporations, corruption in the privatization of state monopolies, and weak corporate governance (Kremlin, 2001).

The economy remained an important part of speeches through to his Federal Assembly statement in 2018, where he stated that the government's priority should be to the "well-being of the people and the prosperity of Russian families." However, rather than speak about the structural problems he addressed almost twenty years earlier, this speech focused on living standards, such as minimum wage, job creation, mortgages, and pensions (Kremlin, 2018). This shift in focus gives strength to the claim that Putin mobilized grievance for political gain; after two decades in power, Putin cannot nurse criticisms about domestic conditions without undermining his own authority and legitimacy.

Putin's speeches, though speaking to deeply rooted economic problems, did not include the alarmist rhetoric employed by Trump. Putin delivered his statements matter-of-factly and

demonstrated a grasp of policy details not present in Trump's speeches. Putin also refrained from recasting economic problems as political vehicles to attack his political opposition, although he emphasized the importance of economic power for Russia's great power status, proclaiming that "Russia must firmly assert itself among the five largest global economies" (Kremlin, 2018).

The idea of an economic crisis featured prominently in Trump's statements. He regularly focused on jobs, taxes, trade, and class issues, even connecting other perceived problems, such as immigration, to them. However, Trump's framing of an economic crisis did not follow generally accepted views about economic inequality, and the need for reforms in various sectors such as student loan debt, pay disparities, and international free trade. Instead, Trump subordinated economic concerns to his own political purposes, and reshaped them for his own ends.

When speaking of jobs, taxes, trade, and class, Trump asserted that Democratic elites, foreign states, and illegal immigrants exploited a benevolent United States to the detriment of Americans. In this way, Trump sought to deconstruct accepted norms and scientific findings about economic problems to replace them with his own personally favorable vision of economic conditions. He weaponized these views to force through various policies, including corporate tax cuts, a ban on immigration from specific countries, refusing asylum seekers, and building a wall on the American-Mexican border. By leveraging these claims, Trump mobilized the insecurities and prejudices of large portions of the American public to accomplish his political aims.

President Putin offered a much more subdued, but also a very sobering, view of Russia's economic crisis. He acknowledged the significant problems caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as the corruption and inefficiency undermining Russia's transition to a market economy. Putin fit these concerns within a larger narrative about Russia recapturing its great power status. He used this opportunity to advocate economic policies that favored his view of a

renewed Russia, including reinvestments in strategic military projects and other undertakings that increased the country's prestige. By the end of the period under review, Putin's statements shifted from descriptions of the country's poor economic conditions to emphasizing its accomplishments during his years in power.

Political Crisis. Given Trump's laser-like focus on his own political destiny, he has unsurprisingly expended a significant amount of verbal ammunition regarding a perceived political crisis in the country. Like the economy, Trump has framed the political crisis as the opposition to his political fortunes, attempting to delegitimize the opposition, dismiss dissidence, make accusations of fake news, and obstruct investigations into his conduct, all the while ignoring the impact of his actions upon the country's constitutional stability.

Trump's attempts to delegitimize the opposition started with the promotion of conspiracy theories and the introduction of insulting nick-names for specific political targets. He infamously promoted the conspiracy theory denying President Obama's birth in the United States (Abramovitz, 2018). More recently, he has promoted, and used the powers of the presidency in an attempt to substantiate, claims that Joe Biden, when Vice President, interfered in Ukraine's justice system to protect his own son from criminal investigation (Mayer, 2019). In response to Democratic investigation about his claims, he tweeted on October 04, 2019 that he has "an obligation to end CORRUPTION, even if that means requesting the help of a foreign country…" and that his efforts have "NOTHING to do with politics… against the Bidens…" but it has to "do with their corruption!" (@realDonaldTrump).

Aside from trafficking in conspiracy theories, Trump also attempted to delegitimize the opposition by appending nicknames and referring to his opponents by their first names rather than their titles. During the Republican primary of the 2016 presidential election, he referred to

competing Republicans Jeb Bush as "low energy", Ted Cruz as "Lyin Ted", and Marco Rubio as

"Little Marco Rubio." In 2016, Trump regularly referred to Hillary Clinton as "Crooked

Hillary," asserting she had "ZERO leadership ability". He also called potential 2020 election

opponent Joe Biden as "Crazy Joe Biden". Aside from electoral competitors, Trump has also

used nicknames against leaders of Congress who have opposed his policies and investigated his

conduct, including Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi ("Nervous Nancy"), Senator Chuck

Schumer ("Cryin Chuck"), Representative Adam Schiff ("Sleazy Adam Schiff" and "Shift Adam

Schiff") (@realDonaldTrump).

In November 2017, Trump introduced the conspiracy theory of a "Deep State" of

intelligence officials and political operatives conspiring against him. On November 29h, he

tweeted about the then-Republican controlled House of Representatives pressuring the FBI to

release documents about its investigation into the Trump campaign, calling it "Big Stuff… Deep

State… Give this information now!" On September 06, 2018, Trump tweeted that "The Deep

State and the Left, and their vehicle, the Fake News Media, are going crazy" in reaction to

Trump's self-proclaimed accomplishments. He also included the whistleblower about his July

2019 phone call with the President of Ukraine in the Deep State, saying "the first so-called

second hand information 'whistleblower' got my phone conversation completely wrong, so

now… another 'whistleblower' is coming in from the Deep State…" (@realDonaldTrump).

In addition to conspiracy theories and name-calling, Trump also called for investigations

and even imprisonment for his political opponents, some of whom he described as traitors or

treasonous in their conduct. During the Special Counsel investigation examining the Trump

campaign's alleged electoral coordination with the Government of Russia, Trump tweeted on

March 03, 2017 a photo of Senator Schumer with President Putin, and stated, "We should start

an immediate investigation into @SenSchumer and his ties to Russia and Putin". On the same

day, he tweeted another photo between delegations of the American Congress, including Nancy

Pelosi, and a Russian political delegation, stating, "I hereby demand a second investigation, after

Schumer, of Pelosi for her close ties to Russia, and lying about it" (@realDonaldTrump). In

May, 2019, Trump partially fulfilled his own demands, directing Attorney General William Barr

to investigate the predication of the Special Counsel's investigation. On May 17, 2019, Trump

tweeted that "my campaign for President was conclusively spied on… TREASON means long

jail sentences, and this was TREASON!" In September 2019, Trump tweeted that "Rep. Adam

Schiff illegally made up a FAKE & terrible statement… Arrest for Treason?" The next month,

Trump tweeted that "Nancy Pelosi knew all of the many Shifty Adam Schiff lies and massive

frauds…" which makes her "every bit as guilty… for High Crimes and Misdemeanors, and even

Treason," requiring that they "must all be immediately impeached!" (@realDonaldTrump).

As a part of his strategy to demonize his political opposition, Trump made numerous

denunciations about claims he characterized as fake news and dismissed negative media

coverage with the same term. In response to growing concerns about his campaign's alleged

coordination with the Russian government to interfere in the 2016 election, on February 16,

2017, he claimed "The Democrats had to come up with a story as to why they lost the election…

so they made up a story – Russia… fake news!" Earlier that month, he had claimed that "any

negative polls are fake news." The next month, as the interest in the Russia matter gained

momentum, he asked via tweet "why doesn't the Fake News talk about Podesta ties to Russia…

or money from Russia to Clinton…?" In January 2019, he tweeted that "Fake News is truly the

ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE" in reference to news media organizations. Following the opening of

the impeachment inquiry by the House of Representatives in 2019 for alleged abuse of office, he

tweeted that "the Fake News Media wants to stay as far as way as possible from the Ukraine and China deals made by the Bidens" and that the "[Corrupt] Media may be even more Corrupt than the Bidens…" (@realDonaldTrump).

The invective in Trump's speeches directed against his opponents did not rise to the same level of his tweets, but occasionally the same themes about the opposition and fake news appeared. In his 2015 announcement to run for President, he stated that American politicians "will never make American great again" because "they're controlled fully by the lobbyists, by the donors, and by the special interests, fully." In the same speech, he later rhetorically asked "how stupid are our leaders?" He later continued this theme, stating that China's "leaders are much smarter than our leaders… our leaders don't understand the game…" Near the end of the speech, he said, "We have losers… we have people that are morally corrupt… we have people that are selling this country down the drain" (Peters & Woolley, 2015). In his 2016 nomination acceptance speech, he criticized Hillary Clinton's "bad instincts" and "bad judgment", characterizing her legacy as "death, destruction, terrorism, and weakness" (Peters & Woolley, 2016). In his 2019 State of the Union Speech, Trump stated that "ridiculous partisan investigations", in reference to the Special Counsel, could obstruct his "economic miracle. He continued by claiming that "if there is going to be peace and legislation, there cannot be war and investigation" (White House, 2019).

In his One Hundred Days speech, Trump claimed that "there are 24 million voter registrations… that are either invalid or significantly inaccurate…" and that "1.8 million dead people are registered to vote and some of them are voting," with another "2.8 million people… registered in more than one state" and "fourteen percent of non-citizens… registered to vote" (Peters & Woolley, 2016).

Given the subjectivity of knowledge and perspective in the metamodern context, reinforced by the material productive powers of information technology, the fixation on fake news and conspirarcy theories suggests an underlying hegemonic contest to achieve message dominance; an ever important objective in a world in which the boundaries of information and identity become increasingly contingent on individual positions.

Trump's exploitation of the public's cynicism to spin a story of political crisis centered around him contrasted with the Russian president's characterization of political crisis. Early in Putin's years in office, he defined the political crisis as strengthening Russia's constitutional order and political stability. In a speech accompanying the submission of bills for consideration by the Russian legislation, Putin described various political problems, which he summed up as "a dictatorship of the law." He asserted that a "state is not simply a piece of land… it is, above all, constitutional order and discipline" and that "if these instruments are weak, so is the state… or it just does not exist" (Kremlin, 2000). In his 2001 Federal Assembly speech, Putin said that "a key issue for any state authorities is how much the country's people trust the state." He continued by stating that this trust "depends directly on how well the state protects [the people] from the arbitrary actions of racketeers, bandits and bribe takers." He further described problems with Russia's legislative system and law enforcement, which fomented corrupt practices and abusive acts (Kremlin, 2001).

By 2018, discussion about political crisis had all but disappeared from Putin's formal addresses. Having held power for almost twenty years, he likely could no longer reasonably articulate a political crisis since it would reflect poorly upon his actions and his government. In his 2016 Federal Assembly speech, Putin embraced continued strides towards direct democracy and competitive elections (despite widespread international condemnation about increasing

authoritarianism in Russia), and claimed that the State Duma had "bolstered its role as a representative body," which contributed to "[proving] that [Russians] live in a healthy society that is confident in its fair and just demands, has ever stronger immunity against populism… and values highly the importance of solidarity, closeness, and unity" (Kremlin, 2016). Indirectly, Putin claimed victory over the political challenges he had faced two decades earlier.

Political crisis fit prominently within Trump's public statements. He framed political crisis to his own advantage, focusing on delegitimizing the political opposition and dissent, propagating falsehoods while dismissing criticism as fake news, and combating investigations while attempting to instigate his own against his rivals.

Trump repeatedly sought to delegitimize his political opposition, dissidence against his political aims (and his person), characterized accusations as fake news, and dismissed investigations into his conduct while calling for investigations into his adversaries. In this way, Trump often solicited political crisis by pursuing policies or undertaking actions at odds with established norms or accepted views of legal possibilities. He also habitually spread conspiracy theories and provable falsehoods. Rather than repair the American public's disdain of the government, Trump's actions sharpened partisanship, simultaneously demolishing confidence in his government held by the opposition while undermining the legitimacy of his rivals among his loyalists. Not only did Trump recognize a political crisis, he diligently worked to craft one that would work to his advantage.

In contrast, Putin recognized a political crisis that emerged in the decade following the dissolution of the Soviet Union that left a constitutionally weak Russia in its place. Putin's early speeches emphasized the importance of restoring constitutional order and improving the country's internal stability, including combating separatist movements. As with the economy,

after a nearly twenty years in power, Putin's rhetoric shifted to emphasizing the

accomplishments of his government. This change reflected reality insofar as threats to Russia's

stability had been suppressed by an authoritarian state that also repressed civil society, including

free speech and media, and direct democratic participation in government, despite claims to the

contrary. Putin's use of democratic language underscores his concerns about public and

international legitimacy even as democratic norms erode worldwide. Popular uprisings in former

Soviet states, particularly Ukraine, potentially alarm Putin who must balance his authoritarian

desires with the democratic aspirations of the public. Even as Putin claims victory over one

political crisis, he fosters another one.

Security Crisis. Like with other issues, Trump crafted images of security crisis, using it

as a vehicle to target his political enemies and promote himself, while offering no details on

policy remedies. When announcing his candidacy for president, Trump first cited terrorism as a

crisis, asking, "How are [the other candidates] going to beat ISIS?" He later continued with other

comments about the Middle East: "Iran is taking over Iraq", "We spent $2 trillion in Iraq… we

lost thousands of lives… and we have nothing…" He later shifted from war in the Middle East to

American military power, "our enemies are getting stronger… and we… are getting weaker…

even our nuclear arsenal doesn't work" (Peters & Woolley, 2015). During his nomination

acceptance speech in 2016, Trump stated that Americans "lived through one international

humiliation after another," citing an incident with Iran in which "our sailors [were] forced to

their knees by their Iranian captors…" He followed by stating that the "Iran deal… will go down

in history as one of the worst deals ever negotiated." He concluded that "America is far less

safe… than when Obama made the decision to put Hillary Clinton in charge of… foreign

policy," citing "Libya is in ruins… Egypt was turned over to the radical Muslim brotherhood…

Iraq is in chaos… the situation is worse than it has ever been before" as examples (Peters & Woolley, 2016).

Later in 2016, while giving a speech on the proposals for his first 100 days in the Oval Office, Trump said America has had "misguided military adventures overseas and wars that go on forever… they don't know how to win the wars…" In the same speech, he later claimed that "we are talking in thousands of thousands" of refugees and "we have no idea who they are… radical Islamic terror is right around corner." (Peters & Woolley, 2016). After winning office, Trump only made a passing reference to security in his inauguration speech, stating, "we've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own" (Peters & Woolley, 2017).

The sporadic identification of security problems, namely terrorism, but also Iran, North Korea, and the conditions of the U.S. military, continued into his time in office. In the 2017 State of the Union speech, Trump claimed that Justice Department data proved that "the vast majority of individuals convicted of terrorism and terrorism-related offenses since 9/11 came here from outside our country" (White House, 2017). The next year's State of the Union did not include any references to security issues at all (White House, 2018). Unsurprisingly, Trump's speech to the United Nations in 2018 referred to a number of perceived security crises. He claimed that "Iran's leaders sow chaos, death, and destruction" and that "Iran's leaders plunder the nation's resources to… spread mayhem…" He concluded that the "Iran deal was a windfall for Iran's leaders…" allowing them to "increase internal repression, finance terrorism, and fund havoc and slaughter…" In the 2019 State of the Union speech, he said that "our brave troops have been fighting in the Middle East for almost 19 years" and that "we have spent more than $7 trillion in the Middle East" (White House, 2019).

Unlike his formal speeches, Trump's twitter account contained frequent references to security issues. He regularly complained about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the "Iran deal"), saying on July 28, 2015 that it "will go down as one of the dumbest & most dangerous misjudgments entered into in history of our country…" Earlier that month, he stated the deal "poses a direct national security threat." He also spoke about terrorism, saying on December 08, 2015, that "our country is facing a major threat from radical Islamic terrorism," for which he blamed the Democrats in another tweet several weeks later: "it's the Democrats' total weakness & incompetence that gave rise to ISIS." He also blamed Hillary Clinton specifically, tweeting on May 21, 2016 that "Crooked Hillary Clinton's foreign interventions unleashed ISIS in Syria, Iraq, and Libya" (@realDonaldTrump).

Although Trump's speeches selected for this examination only explicitly named the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as part of the security problem once, he frequently made clear his views on Twitter. On March 14, 2016, Trump stated that "N.A.T.O is obsolete and must be changed to additionally focus on terrorism…" The remainder of Trump's comments about NATO principally focused on the amount alliance members spent for defense expenditures. On June 10, 2018, Trump tweeted that America "[protects] Europe… at great financial loss, and then get unfairly clobbered on trade." The next month, Trump tweeted that "many countries in NATO, which we are expected to defend, are… short of their current commitment of 2%... will they reimburse the U.S.?" (@realDonaldTrump).

Like Trump, Putin focused on security from the beginning of his tenure. Unlike Trump, Putin articulated clearly defined security problems, starting with internal security and eventually concerning international security. In the shadow of the long shadow of the Soviet collapse, Russia's stability and sovereignty occupied a central place in Putin's security concerns.

In his 2001 speech to the Federal Assembly, Putin called upon the country "to show a sense of responsibility" in resolving the problem of Chechen separatism (Kremlin, 2001). Not until the 2002 Federal Assembly speech did Putin raise the issue of military reform to move the country towards a "professional army while reducing the term of service by conscription." He also reasserted Russia's role as "one of the most reliable guarantors of international stability," connecting it to the issue of international terrorism. He claimed that Russia "has faced terrorism for a long time" and that "the war with international terrorism" also "fully applies to Russia" (Kremlin, 2002). In response to the Beslan school attack in 2004, Putin stated that "[Russians] are living through a time when internal conflicts and interethnic divisions… have now flared up" and that "our country… overnight found itself defenceless…" He asserted that "we showed ourselves to be weak… and the weak get beaten." He further claimed that "we have found ourselves confronting crises, revolts, and terrorist acts…" which constitute "a challenge to all of Russia, to our entire people." (Kremlin, 2014).

By the 2006 Federal Assembly speech, Putin had dedicated more time to discussing security issues in detail. He described a condition in which "the structure of the country's armed forces was not in keeping with the reality of today's situation…" and that the "armed forces were no longer receiving any modern equipment." He also stated that "a huge number of young men of conscript age today suffer from chronic diseases" (Kremlin, 2006). In his 2012 Federal Assembly speech, he rhetorically asked "What will guarantee Russia's sovereignty in the 21st century?" He answered that "Russia must not only preserve its geopolitical relevance" but also "multiply it…" and "generate demand among our neighbors." Russia, he asserted, must have the "ability to mobilize collective actions at the international level" and possess the "military might that guarantees Russia's security and independence" (2012).

In his 2013 Federal Assembly speech, Putin observed that the "intensity of military, political, economic, and informational competition throughout the world is… only getting stronger" with "other power centers… closely monitoring Russia's progress as it grows stronger" (2013). This speech in particular addressed a long list of security issues, including the Syrian civil war, Iran's nuclear ambitions, and protests in Ukraine. He warned about other powers attempting to "push supposedly more progressive development models onto other nations…" At the end of the speech, Putin dedicated a substantial amount of time discussing the development of Russia's military forces, warning that "no one should entertain any illusions about achieving military superiority over Russia" because Russia's "military doctrine and advanced weapons… will unconditionally allow [Russia] to ensure the security of the… state" (2013).

Security continued to play a central role in Putin's speeches in 2014. In the speech to the Federal Assembly that year, he condemned European intervention in Ukraine as "actions…aimed against Ukraine and Russia and against Eurasian integration." He continued by claiming that the West "lied to us many times, made decisions behind our backs…" and that "we are against having a military alliance making itself at home right in our backyard or in our historic territory" (2014). He characterized this position as consistent with sovereignty, stating that "every nation has an inalienable sovereign right to determine its own… path, choose allies and political regimes, create an economy and ensure its security…" (2014).

The next year's speech in 2015 placed an emphasis on terrorism following Russia's intervention in the Syrian civil war. Putin claimed that Russia deployed its military forces to "repel the terrorist threat" and that "everyone must be aware of their responsibility." He concluded that Russia's "military personnel are fighting in Syria for Russia, for the security of Russian citizens" (2015).

By 2018, Putin felt sufficiently confident to claim that "no one has managed to restrain Russia" despite the country's difficulty in the years following the Soviet collapse. He stated that "the entire world knows the names of our newest planes, submarines, anti-aircraft weapons, as well as land-based, airborne and sea-based guided missile systems" and that "all of them are cutting-edge, high-tech weapons." He asserted that "the holes [that] appeared after the USSR disintegrated… were repaired" during his presidency (2018). With Russia's new military confidence, Putin declared that "Russia's growing military power is a solid guarantee of global peace…" and will "remain a key factor of international security…" (2018).

Trump occasionally referred to a security crisis, making references to military conflicts, terrorism, and American alliances with NATO, Japan, and South Korea. Trump framed these issues with a concept generally defined as "America First" in which the United States would place its interests, as defined by Trump, ahead of its international obligations to alliances and international institutions. He capitalized upon the public's exhaustion with the War on Terrorism while exploiting insecurities of the next possible terrorist attack and general disinterest in international affairs. Rather than crafting a coherent strategy that objectively improved American security, Trump embraced his disdain and indifference about external obligations, going so far as to unilaterally withdraw from multiple joint security operations, such as the campaign against ISIS in Syria.

Initially Trump used security problems as a political cudgel against his opponents to accuse them of weakness but once in office, used it to advance his personal agenda. He regularly connected security issues, such as terrorism, with cultural and economic ones, such as immigration. He used this conflation of issues to push through controversial policies, including

taking funds from the military budget to build a border wall and demanding that American allies finance U.S. military operations around the world.

Whereas Trump wrapped security issues around his personal fortunes, Putin framed a security crisis around Russia's weakness internationally that invited challengers to Russian interests. He acknowledged that Russia lost a significant amount of its economic production and military capacity when the Soviet Union dissolved. Putin's commentary on security therefore focused on restoring Russia's great power status, reestablishing the country's constitutional stability, and rehabilitating the country's military capabilities. The speeches form a fairly clear arch from concerns about Russia's sovereignty to an assertive resurgent power having rediscovered its confidence, openly challenging the United States and the West.

Cultural Crisis. President Trump spoke extensively about a perceived cultural crisis, focusing his statements on race, religion, abortion, anti-expertise, and immigration. Infamously, when announcing his candidacy for the president, Trump stated, "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best… they're sending people with lots of problems… they're bringing drugs… crime… rapists…" (Peters & Woolley, 2015). During his nomination acceptance speech, Trump claimed that "nearly 180,000 illegal immigrants with criminal records… are tonight roaming free to threaten peaceful citizens." He continued that "illegal immigrant families… are being released by the tens of thousands into our communities with no regard for… public safety…" He cited a specific example where a "border-crosser" in Nebraska killed 21-years-old Sarah Root, whom he described as "one more child to sacrifice... on the altar of open borders." In this speech, he also announced his intention to "immediately suspend immigration from any nation that has been compromised by terrorism…" (Peters & Woolley, 2016).

Trump also targeted minority groups with his rhetoric, specifically African-Americans, vacillating between describing their living conditions as awful while also promoting his policies as their salvation. In his acceptance speech, Trump said that "nearly four in 10 African-American children are living in poverty, while 58% of African American youth are now not employed." He explicitly linked this issue with immigration, claiming that "decades of record immigration have produced lower wages and higher unemployment for our citizens, especially… African Americans and Latino workers" (Peters & Woolley, 2016).

On January 08, 2019, Trump gave a speech from the White House regarding immigration and his proposed border wall solution. During his statements, Trump described the situation as a "growing humanitarian and security crisis." He claimed that Americans "are hurt by uncontrolled, illegal migration" because it "strains public resources and drives down jobs and wages…" with the "hardest hit [being] African Americans and Hispanic Americans." He defined the southern U.S. border as a "pipeline for vast quantities of illegal drugs" which, he alleged, that "90 percent… floods across from our southern border…" and kills more Americans than died in the Vietnam War. He attempted to further substantiate his claims with statistics, stating that in the previous two years, the government had arrested 266,000 "aliens with criminal records, including… 100,000 assaults, 30,000 sex crimes, and 4,000 violent killings…" with "thousands of Americans… brutally killed by those who illegally entered… and thousands more lives will be lost if we don't act…" (Martinez, 2019).

Putin also occasionally alluded to a cultural crisis. In his 2012 Federal Assembly speech, he lamented that "many moral guides have been lost…" and that people have a willingness to "tolerate corruption, brazen greed, [and] manifestations of extremism and offensive behavior." He warned that this would "create long-term threats to society, security, and even [the] integrity

of Russia" (2012). This theme continued in the 2013 Federal Assembly speech in which he asserted that "many nations are revising their moral values and ethical norms, eroding ethnic traditions…" and requiring people to "accept… the equality of good and evil." He declared that the "destruction of traditional values from above… leads to negative consequences… is also… anti-democratic since it is… contrary to the will of the majority…" (2013).

In the next year's Federal Assembly speech, Putin emphasized that his "priorities are health families and a healthy nation, the traditional values which we inherited from our forefathers… and the guaranteed security of Russia…" (2014). By 2019, he claimed that his government has "been doing everything in our power to strengthen family values" since "our future is at stake", with the "task shared by the state, civil society, religious organizations, political parties, and the media" (2019).

Although Trump cited a cultural crisis, he almost exclusively focused on immigration, while using dog whistles for race and anti-intellectualism. In comparison, he rarely raised issues of religion and abortion.

Trump explicitly made immigration and terrorism part of his framing of the country's cultural crisis, which he captured in his campaign slogan of "Make America Great Again." He regularly connected immigration and terrorism together, as well as to other issues such as jobs and crime. He rarely championed the causes of minorities, instead using them as props or employing a white savior strategy to suggest his actions would somehow benefit all Americans, rather than just white Americans. This served to amplify, not resolve, the sense of cultural crisis in the country and to mobilize political support.

Putin's earliest speeches did not reflect on Russia's cultural integrity. As time passed, he became increasingly concerned for the country's morals and explicitly connected them to

Russia's security and future. He did not articulate any comprehensive philosophy, but it made clear that preserving the country's values depended upon all Russians.

The Past as Utopia

Despite the official campaign slogan of "Make America Great Again," President Trump only selectively and rarely alluded to the past as an ideal form to emulate. During his announcement to run for President, Trump stated, "we need somebody that can take the brand of the United States and make it great again…" (Peters & Woolley, 2015), where he inadvertently coined the term that would define his campaign. In his One Hundred Days speech, Trump appealed to the example of Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president, as someone who "served at a time of division" (Peters & Woolley, 2016), as public, political, and legal opposition began to mount against his administration. Similarly, he referred to "Another Republican president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, [who] initiated the last truly great national infrastructure program – the building of the Interstate Highway System" (Peters & Woolley, 2017) as a way to prod for support for an oft-touted infrastructure renewal program. In a similar vein, Trump also described America as "a nation of builders. We built the Empire State Building in just one year – is it not a disgrace that it can now take 10 years just to get a permit approved for a simple road… together, we can reclaim our building heritage. We will build new roads, bridges, highways… and we will do it with American heart, American hands, and American grit" (White House, 2018).

Unsurprisingly, Putin made numerous comparisons between the Soviet Union and the Russia he governed. He frequently did so to highlight the successes of his government and policies. He also made references to some of Russia's historical experiences.

In 2004, Putin stated that "we live in a time that follows the collapse of a vast and great state… but despite all the difficulties, we were able to preserve the core of what was once the vast Soviet Union…" (2004). This connection to the past reappeared in the 2012 Federal Assembly speech in which Putin stressed the importance of "[preserving] the historical military memory of the Fatherland…" since the "morale of our Armed Forces is held up by traditions, by a living connection to history…" This formed part of a greater Russian identity that "[valued] the unique experience passed on to us by our forefathers…" as "Russia developed as a multi-ethnic nation… bonded by the Russian people, Russian language, and Russian culture… uniting us…" (2012).

In his 2016 Federal Assembly speech, Putin emphasized that "Russian society… needs an objective, honest and deep-reaching analysis…" of the country's history, specifically the 1917 revolutions. He acknowledged the experiences as "common history" that needs "[to be treated] with respect" and that "the thorny road our country has travelled… is all their [son's] native, inalienable heritage" (2016).

By 2018, Putin started making positive comparisons between Soviet achievements and the accomplishments of modern Russia. He devoted several paragraphs describing Russia's economic successes, such as increased port capacity, trade routes, agricultural production, and industrial projects that exceeded Soviet high-water marks (2018). Importantly, in this same speech, Putin detailed Russia's military resurgence since the loss of a considerable amount of territory, economic capacity, and military equipment with the Soviet collapse. According to Putin, the weakness created by the Soviet loss of "44.6% of its military capability due to the division of the Soviet Armed Forces…" invited aggression by the country's adversaries. The following paragraphs then described Russia's modern military projects, specifically the

development of strategic weapons and missiles capable of defeating American missile defense. After describing several weapons in detail, he claimed that "everything I have described… is the result of the last several years, the product of dozens of research institutes… young professionals…" who "are our true heroes…" These developments will "make any potential aggressor think twice…" (2018).

Although both Trump and Putin championed conservative visions for their respective countries, with Trump going so far as to claim he will "make America great again," neither made any noticeable effort to make a logical connection between their actions and that of their countries' pasts. Trump could have capitalized on a long, well-documented history of American exceptionalism but rarely made any references to the past except to highlight very specific, and shallow, examples. Similarly, Putin limited his acknowledgement of Russia's past to recognizing the challenges that shaped the country's modern form and to compare his achievements to that of previous chapters in Russia's history. Although both men appeared to cherish some kind of idealized past, neither articulated any clear picture of what it looked like, and how it might inform a way forward for their countries.

Appeal to Tribal Identity

Appeals to various tribal identities formed a great portion of President Trump's speeches and fit prominently within his messaging. Trump appealed to tribal identities on multiple levels, including class, race, religion, and nationality.

In his One Hundred Days speech, Trump stated that he "[knows] how the game works in Washington and on Wall Street," seeing how "[the politicians] rigged the rules of the game against everyday Americans." He cited the alleged efforts of the "Washington establishment… to stop our campaign" as evidence that the "campaign represents the kind of change that only

arrives once-in-a-lifetime" (Peters & Woolley, 2016). Trump claimed that the "FBI and the

Justice Department covered up [Hillary Clinton's] crimes" (Peters & Woolley, 2016). He further

alleged that the "dishonest, mainstream media" protects Clinton because they "lie and fabricate

stories" to make him look bad (Peters & Woolley, 2016). He then appealed to the listeners,

claiming that "if they can fight somebody like me who has unlimited resources… just look at

what they can do to you… the violation of religious liberties… the theft of your second

amendment…" (Peters & Woolley, 2016). By 2019, Trump had started to warn of the perils of

socialism, declaring that "… we are alarmed by new calls to adopt socialism in our country.

America was founded on liberty and independence… we are born free and we will stay free…

we renew our resolve that America will never be a socialist country" (White House, 2019). After

winning the 2016 election, Trump declared at his inauguration that "… we are not merely

transferring power from one administration to another… but we are transferring power from

Washington D.C. and giving it back to you, the American people." He further proclaimed that

"the forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer." (Peters & Woolley,

2017). He had earlier declared his campaign to "an incredible and great movement made up of

millions of hard working men and women who love their country…" (CNN, 2016)."

In addition to political differences in class, Trump also highlighted economic differences.

In the 2018 State of the Union speech, he declared "the era of economic surrender" to be over

(White House, 2018).

Race and national origin played a major role in Trump's public speeches. He focused

significantly on terrorism and immigration, which in practice meant othering Muslims and

Hispanics. In his inauguration speech, Trump claimed that he "will unite the civilized world

against Radical Islamic Terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the

Earth" (2017). In the 2017 State of the Union speech, Trump stated he would "[take] strong measures to protect our nation from radical Islamic terrorism…" which he connected to immigration by falsely claiming that "the vast majority of individuals convicted of terrorism and terrorism-related offenses since 9/11 came here from outside…" He asserted that "we cannot allow a beachhead of terrorism to form… we cannot allow our nation to become a sanctuary for extremists" (2017).

When giving his 2019 Border National Emergency speech, Trump said, "We are talking about the invasion of our country with drugs, with human traffickers, with all types of criminals and gangs." He further stated that "… we have an invasion of drugs, invasion of gangs, invasion of people and its unacceptable" He justified the declaration of his national emergency by concluding that "… we are declaring [the national emergency] for virtual invasion purposes – drugs, traffickers, and gangs" (The Atlantic, 2019).

Trump occasionally tied immigration and terrorism together, declaring in the 2018 State of the Union speech that the visa lottery and chain migration made possible attempted terrorist attacks in New York City (White House, 2018). He declared in the previous speech that, "We cannot allow a beachhead of terrorism to form inside America" and "allow our nation to become a sanctuary for extremists" (Peters & Woolley, 2017).

On rare occasion, Trump made an appeal to a broader American identity by embracing American exceptionalism and patriotism. In the 2017 State of the Union speech, he stated, "I am asking all citizens to embrace this renewal of the American spirit… believe in yourselves, believe in your future, and believe, once more, in America" (Peters & Woolley, 2017). At the next State of the Union in 2018, he said that "Each test has forged new American heroes to remind us who we are, and to show us what we can be" (White House, 2018). He continued by

stating that, "Over the last year, the world has seen what we always knew: that no people on Earth are so fearless, or daring, or determined as Americans… let us… recognize that the state of our Union is strong because our people are strong" (White House, 2018). In the 2019 State of the Union speech, he said, "In the 20th century, America saved freedom, transformed science, and redefined the middle class standard of living for the entire world to see… now we must step boldly and bravely into the next chapter of this great American adventure…" (White House, 2019). He closed the speech by saying that "We must choose whether we will squander our inheritance – or whether or will proudly declare that we are Americans. We do the incredible. We defy the impossible. We conquer the unknown" (White House, 2019).

Trump characteristically personalized the appeal to tribal identity, going so far as to declare in 2016 that, "I am your voice!" (Peters & Woolley, 2016). He purported his goal to be "to liberate our citizens from the crime and terrorism and lawlessness that threatens their communities" and to "completely rebuild our depleted military…" because "America is a nation of believers, dreamers, and strivers that is being led by a group of censors, critics, and cynics…" (Peters & Woolley, 2016).

Unsurprisingly, the appeals also emphasized the importance of unity. In his inauguration speech, he stated that "American carnage stops right here and stops right now. We are one nation – and their pain is our pain. Their dreams are our dreams; and their success will be our success. We share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny" and that "at the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United States of America, and through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other" (Peters & Woolley, 2017). In an attempt to hedge against the divisiveness caused by his own rhetoric and proposed politics, he also claimed that "We must speak our minds openly, debate our disagreements honestly, but always pursue

solidarity." Near the end of the speech, he stated that "… whether we are black or brown or white, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots… and we all salute the same great American flag" (Peters & Woolley, 2017).

Vladimir Putin had a softer appeal to tribal identity by attempting to mobilize people through populism. In 2016, he stated that it is "unacceptable to drag the grudges, anger, and bitterness of the past into our life today…" and that Russians must "remember that we are a single people, a united people, and we have only one Russia" (2016). In 2019, he had declared that "People are at the core of the national projects, which are designed to bring about a new quality of life for all generations" (Kremlin, 2019). He highlighted the main goal of "preserving our nation, which means providing all-around support to families… family, childbirth, procreation, and respect for the elderly have always served as a powerful moral framework for Russia and its multi-ethnic people…" (Kremlin, 2019).

Trump made regular appeals to tribal identity using political, economic, and racialized language to appeal to various parts of the American public he considered essential to continued political success. He first attempted to separate himself from the elites in the Democratic Party by casting doubt upon their patriotism, legitimacy, and competency while promoting a vision of himself as champion of the American underclass. He also regularly referred to an "invasion" of America by criminals and illegal immigrants, eroding confidence in public safety. He crafted a view of the world in which [white] Americans were besieged by outside groups looking to destroy the American nation.

In contrast, appeals to tribal identity did not feature significantly in Putin's speeches. Although he made occasional calls to a mild form of Russian nationalism linked to the country's

security and prestige, he made few appeals on the basis of racialized or political language that defined out- and in-groups.

Response: the Call for Authoritarianism

Neither Trump nor Putin made explicitly calls for authoritarianism. However, both articulated visions that challenged commonly accepted democratic norms. Given the need to balance public perceptions and temper both domestic and international condemnation, both individuals crafted public images that attempted to portray their views and actions as consistent with democratic government, despite evidence suggesting otherwise.

President Trump focused on satisfying his political base, often at the expense of the rest of the electorate. On August 07, 2017, he tweeted that "… Supreme Court pick, economic enthusiasm, deregulation & so much more have driven Trump base even close together. Will never change!" (@realDonaldTrump). On December 24, 2017, he tweeted that the "Fake News refuses to talk about how Big and how Strong our BASE is… nobody is going to beat us" (@realDonaldTrump). Trump rarely made appeals to negotiation, bipartisanship, and compromise, except to accuse his opponents of failing to live up to these expectations.

Additionally, as noted by Jane Chong in the The Atlantic (2020), Trump articulated a "strange and dangerous" idea about his "absolute right" to conduct specific actions. Between May 2017 and November 2019, Trump used this term five times. On May 16, 2017, in response to criticism about his release of classified information to senior Russian officials, Trump tweeted "As President I wanted to share with Russia.. which I have the absolute right to do…" (@realDonaldTrump). On June 04, 2018, Trump tweeted, "As has been stated by numerous legal scholars, I have the absolute right to PARDON myself…" (@realDonaldTrump). Again, in defense of his conduct, on April 13, 2019, Trump tweeted that "I never offered Pardons to

Homeland Security Officials, never ordered anyone to close our Southern Border (although I have the absolute right to do so…)" (@realDonaldTrump). On October 03, 2019, Trump tweeted that "As President of the United States, I have an absolute right, perhaps even a duty, to investigate, or have investigated, CORRUPTION, and that would include asking, or suggesting, other Countries to help us out!" (@realDonaldTrump). In response to his harassment and eventual dismissal of former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, Trump tweeted, in part… "It is a U.S. President's absolute right to appoint ambassadors" (@realDonaldTrump).

As described in previous sections of this chapter, Putin focused on strengthening the capabilities of the state in response to the articulated crises. As late as 2016, Putin claimed that the "course of developing the political system, the institutions of direct democracy, and of making elections more competitive is completely justified…" In the same speech, he claimed that the "State Duma has bolstered its role as a representative body and the legislative branch of power's authority has strengthened in general" (2016). These nods to democratic governance contrast with the documented experience in Russia identifying Putin's consolidation of power as described in earlier chapters. However, later in this same speech, Putin rhetorically asked "is it possible to achieve major strategic goals in fragmented society?" He also asked if "we can develop successfully on the shaky foundation of a weak state and apathetic government controlled from abroad…" (2016). These questions betray a skepticism of democratic governance that embraces diverse political agendas and a multi-polar civil society capable of peacefully managing competing interests.

Neither Trump nor Putin made any explicit references to pursuing an authoritarian political project. However, the whole body of their speeches suggest a skepticism of democratic governance and power sharing. Trump formulated a response that centered on his personal action

and power with little regard for ethical norms and legal considerations. He also celebrated the strength of his political basis and connected his actions to their well-being. Putin formulated a response that focused on centralizing the state apparatus while making rhetorical concessions to democratic governance, going so far as to describe ways in which he claims to have strengthened the role of the legislative branch. However, his views expressed elsewhere suggest skepticism with the viability of a society that ideologically or political fragmented. Instead, he forwards a view of a Russia united behind its history, language, and values.

Nevertheless, Trump could barely disguise his disregard for democratic norms even without explicitly calling for some variant of dictatorship. In defense of his ethically and legally questionable conduct, he several times invoked an "absolute right" to carry himself in that way, as if it somehow insulated his behavior from review or reproach. Even if Trump did not articulate a specific authoritarian program, his primal instinct to defend and center himself at all costs produces the same outcome.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In an article in Foreign Policy magazine in September 2019, former staff member on the U.S. Secretary of State's policy planning staff Charles Edel, wrote that "there is an ongoing assault on [American] democratic norms and values, which has led to the coarsening of the U.S. social fabric and the erosion of unspoken… norms that provide the guardrails of self-government" (2019). When Donald Trump declared his candidacy for president of the United States, it garnered mixed reaction: laughter and mockery, alarm and concern, and also inspiration and pride. As his campaign gained momentum, his policy proposals becoming clearer, the contradictions in public perception and political differences became more acute. Trump entered the White House after eight years of relative stability secured by his predecessor, Barack Obama, who inherited a country gripped by economic crisis and mired in seemingly unending wars. Nevertheless, Trump's rhetoric reflected a view of a broken and cowered America requiring renewal.

While the drama of American politics unfolded, Russian president Vladimir Putin had been in power for almost 20 years. He too had entered office during a time of crisis, only the second Russian president since the Soviet collapse dismembered the latest incarnation of the Russian empire. The turmoil of the term of the first president, Boris Yeltsin, provided Putin with an opportunity to move Russia towards democratization and international integration, a promise hoped for by Russophiles in the West. However, as Putin consolidated political power and stabilized the state and economy, it became clear he relied upon authoritarianism to keep the whole apparatus together. By 2019, Russia had invaded two of its neighbors, Georgia and Ukraine, murdered dozens of journalists, used weapons of mass destruction to kill defectors abroad, and asphyxiated the nascent Russian civil society. This resulted in economic sanctions

against the country as well the expulsion of dozens of its diplomatic personnel from Europe and

the United States.

In the background, the global superstructure also faced challenges. Technological

advances enabled the connection of people and ideas around the world, giving rise to seemingly

spontaneous grassroots uprisings, like the Arab Spring. Global scientists also warned of the

impending danger of climate change that will force changes on the international political and

economic order as coastlines creep on dense urban centers, droughts depress agricultural

production, and resource conflicts become more intense. The resultant disruptions, appearing as

mass migrations, famines, and water scarcity, among many other challenges, promise to confront

every level of human society.

The aspirations of an unending democratic future provided by the conclusion of the Cold

War disappeared in the hardships of the War on Terrorism, global economic crisis, cultural

upheaval, environmental crisis, and the re-emergence of great power politics. Both Trump and

Putin occupy positions to decisively influence how the world will respond to these events. Their

spoken word givens insight into how they have responded, and intend to respond, to these

matters.

The upheaval across all domains of world stability – political, economic, cultural,

environmental – defines the manifestation of a new era of Metamodernism. Vermeulen and van

den Akker described Metamodernism as an "oscillation between a typically modern commitment

and a markedly postmodern detachment" (2010). Tuner noted that Metamodernism contained a

"pragmatic romanticism unhindered by ideological anchorage" (2011); in other words, a

yearning for an idealized past without ideological preconditions for action in the present. The

demolition of "ideological anchorage" corresponds with Abramson's recognition of a "collapse

of distance" and the emergence of "multiple subjectivities" (2015), creating a cultural and informational ecosystem consisting of constant collision and movement between contradictory impulses. Elites and state actors, in this context, can more effectively mobilize political power by actively shaping these subjectivities and bypassing established power structures.

Metamodernism represents the culmination of postmodernism's deconstruction of the center and its pluralistic diffusion of power. Soon after World War Two, Heidegger recognized a coming clash of subjectivities in a "struggle of world views" (1954). Foucault soon followed, describing "a conception of power which replaces… the law with the viewpoint of the objective" (1976). Lyotard depicted an "an immanent… network… which [is] in constant flux" because of an "erosion of the legitimacy of the principle of knowledge" (1979). Derrida further asserted that "in the absence of a center… everything becomes discourse" (1966). Nearing the end of the Cold War, with its fixed ideological conflict, Baudrillard asserted that the distance of symbols from their original meaning created a situation where "the real is no longer what it used to be," replaced by a "proliferation of myths… and signs…" (1983). Together, these philosophers described a world in which subjectivities replace anchored narratives. Postmodernism created an epistemological chasm to be filled by Metamodernism.

As postmodernism demolished the intellectual structure of the West, Russia had long represented a post-modern polity. Dobrenko described a country "utterly distracted by its own thwarted identity complex" (2011). Ephstein identified "the production of reality" as a historical Russian practice (1995). As early as 1839, a visitor to Russsia, the Marquis de Custine, labelled Russia a "country of fictions" where "words matter more than reality" (2014). Dobrenko further argued that Russia regularly overcame crisis with disguise, with the modern materialization simulating a 'market economy', 'democracy', and 'postmodernism'" (2011).

Both the United States and modern Russia have arrived at the metamodern moment through their own respective historical processes. But the process for both included political, economic, and social turmoil; the War on Terrorism, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 2008 Great Recession, and so on. Combined with the structural instability instigated by technological developments, environmental crisis, and, chiefly, postmodern's deconstruction, the metamodern era has ushered in a chapter as uncertain as almost any before it.

The methodology used by this examination to understand the impact of Metamodernism on elite decision-making consisted of the qualitative content analysis of public statements made by President Donald Trump of the United States and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. The research focused on four primary themes: crisis as pretext, the past as utopia, appeal to tribal identity, and response. These themes broadly cover how the two leaders frame crisis and intend to use it to mobilize political power.

The sample chosen – 31 speeches and 52 tweets – represent the points in which the leaders made contact with the public, making known their views and intentions, at least as publicly stated. In order to justify their policies, how they frame their actions and intentions for public consumption provides insight into the ways in which they view the various crises perceived to be affecting their respective countries.

The Types of Metamodern Presidents?

Both Trump and Putin represented aspects of Metamodernism in their own idiosyncratic ways; Trump embracing demagoguery with Putin practicing a more subtle conservative nationalism. Despite their differences in methods, both articulated an idealized vision of an autocratic, or at the very least an anti-democratic, future to be fulfilled by the mobilization of a loyal, if sometimes radicalized, tribal base.

Metamodernism describes a world engrossed in crisis. Populations the world over suffer from varying degrees of assault by war, terrorism, economic instability, social disorder, and environmental disaster. Ostensibly stable and centered societies, like those in the United States and Russia, which have significantly entrenched self-proscribed identities about holding a central place in world affairs, also face these problems. Not conditioned to this kind of challenge, Metamodernism implies, these societies, while perhaps possessing the material means to navigate them relatively safely, do not have the intellectual or psychological capacities to process them since they so deeply confront long held and cherished beliefs.

Although both Trump and Putin exploit crisis to their own political advantage, they do so differently. Trump specifically exploits the feeling of crisis, but substantially reframes crisis to his benefit; to the extent that he regularly traffics in long dismissed conspiracy theories. His campaign to politically neuter Joe Biden by promoting an elaborate conspiracy of corruption and foreign political interference centered on Ukraine epitomizes the highest extreme of crisis exploitation. Trump has thoroughly cast off all "ideological anchorage", even long established bipartisan political norms, inviting incredible resistance from his opposition. In defining such extravagant and existential crises, Trump has laid the intellectual framework to justify any action he decides to pursue, going so far as to identify his critics and political opponents as traitors.

In contrast, Putin articulated a Russian-centered view of crisis that many found reasonable, given the experiences in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. He made acknowledgements about Soviet and Russian weaknesses and described them in a language commonly accepted by others. However, whereas Trump emphasized the threat to a narrowly defined vision of America and Americas, Putin focused on the idea of a strong, secure Russia, washing over any internal differences that might exist.

The contrasts between how Trump and Putin characterized crisis say as much about their personalities as it does about the opportunities for authoritarian personalities to exploit insecurities and instability. Trump used the opportunity to further deconstruct institutions and norms that challenged his person. This created a dynamic of power centered on Trump himself, rather than the office he occupied; weakening the constitutional order and further fueling the sense of crisis. Putin, for his part, used the occasion to construct a state that, while also centered on his person, possessed increased capabilities over time and that increased confidence in the resolution of the crises articulated by him.

The lack of discussion by either Trump or Putin about their view of an idealized past suggests that one does not exist and that both presidents view the past as a prop to justify political action. Neither president articulated a coherent political philosophy that might provide a framework for their policies and connect them to their countries' respective pasts. This also suggests that the conservative identities they have cultivated may in fact be rootless, which contradict the fundamental premise of conservatism and contribute to the sense of crisis that dominates the metamodern era.

To the extent that both Trump and Putin represent Metamodernism, they both did so in idiosyncratic ways; perhaps representing two different branches of the same philosophical path. For his part, Trump personified a deeply cynical, rash, and egocentric version of Metamodernism that knowingly sought to exploit the insecurities, vulnerabilities, and divisions of the public to advance the interests of a narrow circle of elites centered on Trump himself. In nearly every aspect of crisis, he managed to re-frame the issue to what?? that personally benefited him politically, and perhaps even financially. He further exacerbated crisis by closely embracing specific tribal identities (namely white Christians) at the expense of all others; going so far as to

question the underlying legitimacy of the American constitutional system. Lastly, where challenged about whether he should do something, he often resorted to the common authoritarian defense that he could do it.

In contrast, Putin presented a more measured version of Metamodernism that also recognized and advantageously defined specific crises. Even as Putin constructed an authoritarian state, he did so in a methodical way, and centered its power on an alliance of security officials and oligarchs, rather than exclusively in his own person. After almost two decades in power, the full arc of Putin's actions can be examined. Putin responded to the metamodern era by building a state in accordance with his vision.

Despite wrapping themselves up in national identity and patriotism, neither Trump or Putin articulated in their speeches any deep understanding or appreciation of their countries' histories. One would expect conservative movements that idealized a utopian-like past to place more emphasis on their national histories, even if selectively imagined, and offer a narrative that expresses their movement as a logical extension of some kind national destiny. Although they selectively highlighted important national achievements, neither put forward any kind of coherent framework to restore an idealized past. This epistemological and ideological break from history, an opening filled in by imagination free of "ideological anchorage", calls into question the extent to which either can be defined as 'conservative' – after all, neither pursued the restoration of national traditions and customs. Trump regularly received criticism for his disregard of American political norms and traditions. For his part, Putin has not pursued either monarchism or communism; the only two political traditions with any substance in Russian history. The obvious tension between these leaders' self-proclaimed conservatism and the rejection of their countries' respective historical traditions can only be resolved by recognizing

their attempt to assert a narrow tribal identity and projecting that identity both backwards into

history and forward into the future. In this way, the absence of any serious dialogue about an

idealized past reflects a metamodern subjectivity attempting to reframe historical fact. Historical

revisionism, or even mythical construction, therefore best describes a metamodern president.

Likewise, this same juxtaposition may explain the lack of explicit calls for

authoritarianism even as both leaders destroy democratic obstacles to their power and work to

build political arrangements that reinforce autocracy. Even as Trump deconstructs American

democratic norms and Putin uses democratic language as a political prop, both likely recognize

that overtly championing authoritarianism may damage their political programs. Both presidents

must navigate the subjective identities of both their supporters and their opposition to maintain a

stable political coalition capable of implementing the autocratic project in practice.

This examination therefore comes to the point where it becomes necessary to propose a

framework for the views shared by Trump and Putin. Trump's articulation can be defined as

deconstructive Metamodernism, where he actively exploited crisis to deconstruct a state and

norms to replace them with authoritarian political power. To this end, Trump mobilized anger

and resent to advance his agenda. In contrast, Putin's framework can be defined as constructive

Metamodernism, where he exploits crisis to build a state centered on authoritarian political

power. Putin appeared to frequently invoke patriotic themes to inspire loyalty and obedience as a

part of this effort. A counter-factual placing Trump and Putin in each other's positions might

suggest that either would fail to achieve what the other has accomplished and highlight the

differences in their methods. Trump's singular focus on his personal fortune and compulsive

behavior would make it difficult for him to extract a country from a crisis as severe as Russia's

experiences in the early 1990s. He would be more comparable to the first Russian president,

Boris Yeltsin, whose mismanagement only heightened Russia's problems. In contrast, Putin's obsession with stability and constitutional order, to be solved by authoritarianism, would make him an unlikely candidate to deconstruct the institutions of relatively stable state with strong political norms. The agendas and strategies, as much as they can be defined as either, adopted by Trump and Putin would not be possible without the conditions of Metamodernism that shattered the sense of stability and security among their targeted audiences.

The sampled speeches of President Trump illustrate a consistent theme of delegitimizing and dismantling political obstacles, including rivals, ideas and norms, relationships, and institutions. Such a campaign appears designed exclusively to protect and promote the political fortunes of Trump's person, even at the expense of the very office he holds. Should Trump supporters genuinely desire an authoritarian form of government, it would be more effective to replace Trump with a political figure who did not so regularly mobilize opposition to his agenda and the powers of his office. Trump's actions have called into the question the powers of the President, which undermines any project intended to concentrate that office's power. The importance of this distinction between power in Trump's person and the power of Trump's office becomes evident when examined through a lens of deconstructionism. Trump seeks to center himself in a world in which [perceived] crisis, technology, and subjective identity of thoroughly decentered traditional hubs of power, influence, and culture. This process also involved dismantling the remaining institutional and ideological pillars in opposition to his project by reframing or inventing crisis.

In contrast, Putin, in the absence of a stable political state, aimed to replace a vacuum with his own political vision. In the absence of authority, Putin sought to create one by constructing a state around him. His specific experiences and ideological preferences, developed

during his time as a Soviet security officer, shaped the kind of state he envisioned. Nevertheless, even with real crisis, Putin variously emphasized one crisis or another depending on circumstances. In the early years, circumstances and emergencies appeared forced on him, but as his power consolidated, he could choose which problems gained his attention. By the end of the period of study for this dissertation, Putin increased his focus on international security, particularly Russia's standing vis-à-vis the United States.

Despite their differences in the approaches by Trump and Putin, both energetically used crisis to their advantage and, to varying degrees, sought to mobilize others on the basis of tribal identity.

The failure of the universal ideologies like socialism, capitalism, liberalism, and even to some extent nationalism, has created a situation in which political leaders, without ideological anchorage, can shamelessly exploit social discord and technological connection to put forward an ideological promiscuous and bland authoritarianism. Without the necessity of forming any kind of rational philosophy to govern action, metamodern leaders, exemplified by Trump, can say whatever they determine to be in their self-interest without consequence. Possessing sophisticated information tools, they can deliver contradictory messages to targeted segments of the population to mobilize support. Trump's twitter handle is unironically @realDonaldTrump despite the amount of falsehoods he promotes and the absence of any ideological conviction; perhaps the embodiment of Metamodernism estrangement from a knowable reality. They can dispense with any form of logical action except for the one that ultimately drives them: power. Power justifies itself. The speeches sampled above provide a testimony to the making of a metamodern president.

Significance of Research

The research will further the evaluation of the political conditions of the United States and Russia that gave rise to authoritarian presidents despite institutional, cultural, and civic opposition by scrutinizing the language used by Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin to mobilize political support. This scrutiny isolated the specific themes and codes emphasized by the leaders that they feel most substantially move their supporters. By digesting the texts and speeches of these presidents, analysis substantiates to what extent these leaders present the triumph of the Metamodern will, potentially signifying the end of modern democratic history. Understanding this thread of Metamodernism enables a deeper and richer understanding of the larger forces that work for and against democratic governance and identifies areas of potential conflict.

Given that conflict features predominantly in the concepts of Metamodernism, it naturally suggests that an analysis through the frame of Metamodernism will have bearing on the theories of conflict and its resolution. Dean Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim defined conflict as a "perceived divergence of interest" and a "belief that the parties' current aspirations are incompatible" (p. 8, 2004). The identity crisis and tribalism at the center of Metamodernism, described throughout this examination, correlates with the "perceived divergence of interest", which subsequent chapters illustrate in greater detail. Pruitt and Kim go on to define "interests" as "people's feelings about what is basically desirable", where others have used "values" or "needs" (p. 15). In the chapter discussing the nature and sources of conflict, including its principal components, the authors discuss the conditions, relations, identities that contribute to conflict. The ways in which national leaders, using the power of the pulpit as well as any political powers they exercise, manipulate conflict conditions for their own personal gain may further understanding of how conflicts emerge or escalate. These individuals can create or exploit situations in which they

possess asymmetric advantages over their perceived adversaries, whether defined legally, politically, economically, or socially. In this way, metamodermism provides both an ideological and strategic opening for opportunistic leaders to exploit.

In a world of increasing complexity, not only in the sophistication of economic and political systems, but also in subjective identities and how these identities relate to each other and shape public preferences, an exploration of Metamodernism also raises important questions about the rational actor model. This process assumes that organizations, including governments and political parties, have a rational decision-making process capable of setting goals and implementing strategies to achieve them (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). These assumptions frequently form an unspoken basis of conflict resolution theories that seek to build a methodical process for understanding conflicts and finding ways to mitigate or end them. However, the identities that people assume, how they resolve tension between them, and how that manifests in larger social and political discourse, may not produce rational goals and strategies. Rather, it could produce sub-optimal strategies or call into the question the rationality of specific actors.

This examination, which focused on the language used by Trump and Putin, provides a prospect to explore the way in which leaders deliberately manipulate, and sometimes exacerbate, a crisis situation for their own advantage. These kinds of actors, which spoil attempts for conflict resolution, represent a major obstacle to solving problems. Examining how they undertake such a campaign may allow for the development of strategies to mitigate their detrimental impact on conflict resolution.

Both concepts of Metamodernism proposed here (destructive and constructive) advance understanding of conflict resolution in several ways. First, it suggests that the structure of conflict may be created or shaped through asymmetric power relationships. Trump and Putin

hold disproportionate power and through their speeches (and Trump's tweets), they can shape the contours of a conflict (or create one) by words alone. Second, it demonstrates that practitioners in conflict resolution should not take the good faith of others for granted and be cognizant that others may find advantages in continuing conflict. Third, and most importantly, it suggests that there may not be rational resolutions to conflict available; the structure of a conflict may in itself be irrational making intractable conflict inevitable. This almost wholly depends on the intentions of the stronger party in asymmetric power relationships; the conditions of the metamodern era, such as the collapse of distance and the fragmentation of identities, only contribute to the underlying paradoxical logic of the conflict. Whereas traditional conflict resolution practice largely assumes rational actors, and bases its recommendations on this fact, the visions articulated by Trump, and to a lesser extent Putin, suggest that this assumption does not always hold true.

Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 1, typologizing elite behavior within the context of Metamodernism can also inform international relations theories and understanding authoritarian tendencies for conflict. There could emerge from that examination a better understanding of the consequences of elite behavior both domestically and internationally.

With states, like societies, contingent upon subjectivities and perspectives, they possess a unique fragility as a consequence of their position between domestic and international systems and processes. The features of Metamodernism – crisis, collapsing distances, and so on – all directly assault the presumptive sovereignty of states. If state identity also relies upon the formulation of an other to not only define a state's spatial existence but also its moral superiority and its political impulse, Metamodernism not only threatens to de-center both the United States and Russia, but also the state itself. Since states ultimately rely upon the exercise of power and

the use of interrogative violence to not only create its own sovereign exclusion but to also rejuvenate its own moral preeminence, policy determined by Metamodernist presidents such as Trump and Putin likely resort to authoritarianism, other-ism, and violence from a position of perceived weakness and not of strength. Whether crisis threatens the national whole or individual political power, the crisis represents not an opportunity to fulfill some idealized national value (such as republicanism, liberty, or fraternity), but instead an existential threat which justifies any excess and utmost exertion in response. Consequently, the ways in which Trump and Putin frame crisis appear to have a direct connection to how they perceive their respective countries: not as confident superpowers but as a gravely injured polities nursing a perceived victimization by a nebulously defined other.

How states with perceived weaknesses but actual strength respond to this dissonance opens serious questions about international conflict and stability. This may trigger a cataclysmic death spiral in which every act of physical exertion to make a country great again diminishes its moral authority, thereby further de-centering it and inflating the distance between its perceived weakness and actual strength. David Rapkin and Dan Braaten (2009) argued that international legitimacy emerges from a "substantive base of shared values," "constitutionalism…" defined as "open, accessible decision procedures" with "strategic restraint in the use of… power," and "successful outcomes." The instincts of Metamodernist presidents contradict this conception of international legitimacy, and in fact seek to actively confront it as a cosmopolitan other. The transition from one hegemonic power to another, or the emergence of a hegemonc contender, may produce a world war in which the fundamental questions of a state's place is finally decided. Robert Gilpin (1988) defined a hegemonic war as a conflict in which "an unstable system [where] economic, technological, and other changes [erode] the… position of the

hegemonic state" with the outcome producing a "new international structure" (p. 592). He doubted that a "statesman would view the eventual gains from the great wars of history as commensurate with [their] eventual costs" but cautioned that "once a war, however limited, begins it can release powerful forces unforeseen by the instigators" (p. 613). Where the crises of the Metamodern era challenge the presumed hegemony of the United States; Trump's reframing of national and international problems for his own political gain can potentially provide that spark that triggers a global conflagration.

Complicating this matter further, leaders, particularly Trump, conflate personal interest with national interest as evidenced by how Trump has defined crises in the Metamodern era. Although two-level game theory makes assumptions about the characteristics of the actor evaluating the domestic and international outcomes and what positive outcomes can be produced, an authoritarian president that conceives personal political power to be in the state interest ignores those assumptions. This potentially has serious consequences for a state's behavior, international security, and domestic tranquility. Such a president may make an international concession or undertake a military operation with serious international consequences (including death) but offers significant personal gain, such as monetary wealth or ego awards. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Trump promised Putin medical ventilators even as U.S. governors expressed concerns about a domestic shortage for American patients. (Business Insider, 2020). Trump also terminated America's relationship with the World Health Organization, blaming it for the pandemic, even as the United States alone suffers from the catastrophic response of its government to the crisis (BBC, 2020). In both of these instances, Trump likely perceived personal political gain even while knowing the measurable and definite consequences of the citizens for whom he is responsible.

These tendencies make conflict resolution practices at all levels particularly difficult and may make conflicts more intractable. Conflict resolution theories, such as that articulated by Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall in Contemporary Conflict Resolution (2011), rely in part on accepted international systems, rational decision-makers, and good faith actors to produce effective if difficult conflict resolution mechanisms. The authors stated that their approach is "committed to combatting and overcoming inequalities and injustices worldwide, so that a fair wind as possible can be given to the life hopes and aspirations of the many…" and to promote "norms, techniques, tools, and institutions to make sure that [the world] remains predominantly non-violent" (p. 423). The authors hope that the next generation of conflict resolution practictioners embrace cosmopolitanism to form a basis for "global partnership for peacebuilding" and to inspire a sense of "shared humanity" that transcends tribal identities of such as "family, clan, ethnic group" and so on.

But this seems increasingly unlikely in a Metamodern world in which the collision of subjectivities calls to power authoritarian responses that rely upon exacerbating sectional identities and destroying cooperative institutions to be replaced by personal authority. Theory and practice ultimately rely upon experience and observation that produce some level of predictability upon which can be predicated plans and intentions to shape conditions for some sought after outcome. Although this dissertation attempted to provide some level of measurability to the behavior of Trump and Putin, it found as much only to the extent that these actors behave in a narrowly defined self-interest, even at the expense of the collective good for which they hold some responsibility to protect. This self-interest exceeds that which has defined traditional political theories as early as Thucydides and Machiavelli, which some may write off as miscalculation or self-destructiveness, but which appear to be of a more serious kind than

what is normally expected of political actors, if only because there is a barely disguised attempt at pretense; but also because the actors invariably find themselves in a trap in which the only successful strategy is continued escalation which might ultimately result in exhaustion or destruction. Stability comes in part from a sense of security and confidence, neither of which can be comfortably held when relying upon evaluating the self-interest of an individual actor committed to a strategy of escalation, even if punctuated with tactical pauses. Empower this individual with a sophisticated political machine and place them at the top of a wary superpower, there emerges a volatile mix in which security and confidence cannot exist at any level for anyone. Personal expediency becomes exigency and exigency becomes policy. In such environment, there is no stability. This of course does not suggest the unsuitability of previous theory, but instead evidences an under-appreciated fraility. Processes and mechanicisms may effectively work in predictable systems with measureable connections between inputs and outputs, but Metamodernism's contginencies and crises create, destroy, and recreate such connections at a remarkable pace; when weaponized by self-interested political actors armed with all the elements of national power and committed to continued escalation, one wonders how such a conflict would ever end. Herman Schmid (1968) characterized peace researchers as invested in an "ideology of internationalism" who have "learned how to solve conflicts, how to integrate a system, how to avoid manifest organized violence… and… believes that what is good for the system is in the long run good for its elements" (p. 229). This focus on "control of the international system to prevent major breakdowns" and "integration of the international system to make it more stable" contradicts the aims of Metamodernist leaders helming ego-wounded superpowers intent on revolting against the impulses of the era to amalgamate global cultural, economic, and political systems.

Therefore, evaluating presidents within a Metamodern framework has deep consequences for conflict resolution theory and practice. This dissertation only goes so far as to suggest that these types of actors demand further evaluation as a new type addressed only in parts and not as a whole by previous theory. However, since the Metamodernist era calls into question the legitimacy and strength of long-standing norms and institutions, the practices that rely upon those those same norms and institutions must also be reassessed. The importance of this assessment becomes all the more evident as societies navigate through the nexus that confronts them.

Charting the Way Forward: Lessons and Recommendations

The examination suggests three paths forward for research and related recommendations: first, establishing a typology of leadership types that may provide a framework for understanding and predicting elite behavior; second, further discourse analysis on the such leaders' remarks to elicit further information regarding their basis and consequences; and third, examining the fundamental assumptions and norms of conflict resolution in the context of Metamodernism.

The previous sections suggested the potential existence of types of metamodern presidents, given the contextual situation of both Presidents Trump and Putin. Although they appeared to share similar aims, their speeches likely reflected the same desire but in different points on in the process in fulfilling those desires. Further research exploring the contours of a metamodern leader, what they might look like, and how they might behavior, could add to the body of knowledge on elite behavior within a time of unprecedented confluence of crises and technology. A primary research focus could be the further development of constructionist and deconstructionist metamodern as political concepts. Such exploration could identify specific practices or processes of implementation that highlight strategies that could mitigate the harm

such policies might impose. One research path could explore the construction of language and use of coded language by either President to measure its effect on public attitudes and political activities. This focus on communication could highlight how the digital bully pulpit, combined with the crisis language of a president in the metamodernist era, shapes political decision-making

Secondly, this examination limited its study to providing a framework for coding selected language used by two leaders. Further research can focus on a deeper discourse analysis of these two individuals, of expanding the selection to include more of their remarks, analyzing the policies connected to their administrations within this context, or examining other leaders, either elites within the United States in Russia, or elites (including heads of state or government) in other countries. Such research might lead analysis into a direction of more fully developing collective understsanding of the conditions of the metamodern era and how political leaders respond to them.

A third research path could use quantitative analysis to measure the extent to which the use of specific keywords have a correlation on political policy or public opinion. A quantitative approach could complement qualitive analysis by providing mathematical specificity to a complex idea and provide targeted solutions for identified problems.

A fourth research approach could address the apparent absence of historical appreciation (or, the presence of mythical construction) in a metamodernist context that places emphasis on shifting subjectivities in constant proximal tension. This avenue may yield further insight into how leaders craft narratives in widening contingent spaces with collapsing distances.

A fifth research path could explore Metamodernism in different contexts, such as an acute crisis (such as a pandemic) in comparison to a structural one (such as economic equality or

climate change), or in countries with weaker institutions and norms. These could provide

opportunities to analyze the subject from different angles where context may impact outcomes.

Lastly, as discussed in the previous section, Metamodernism challenges the established

norms and institutions governing behavior in regards to conflict and peace. The contradictions

and heightened escalations of the era depend less on mutually accepted systems and

mechanisms; even as spatial and social distance decreases, dissonance increases as people

embrace contingent subjectivities, some of which appear to be mutually exclusive. Developing

mechanicisms that receive legitimacy from distinct parties that can barely agree on the same set

of facts, much less find common values, can prove exceedingly difficult. The focus therefore

should be on preventing peace-building from falling victim to Metamodernism's tendency to

reduce objects to signals that only reflect a transitory position in an elaborate matrix of noise and

clutter.

Testing the boundaries of Metamodernism can identify the limits of theory and, more

practically, areas where the challenges of Metamodernism might prove overwhelming for

pursuits of justice, peace, and conflict resolution.

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realDonaldTrump (2015, June 03). The Trans-Pacific Partnership will increase our trade deficits & send even more jobs overseas. This is a bad deal… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/606125803420700672

realDonaldTrump (2015, June 27). Only very stupid people think that the United States is making good trade deals with Mexico. Mexico is killing us… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/614844928095559681

realDonaldTrump (2015, July 16). The Iran deal poses a direct national security threat. It must be stopped in Congress. Stand up Republicans! [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/621770572108795905

realDonaldTrump (2015, July 28). .#IranDeal will go down as one of the dumbest & most dangerous misjudgments ever entered into in history of our country—incompetent leader! [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/ 626079024373202946

realDonaldTrump (2015, October 19). It's really cold outside, they are calling it a major freeze, weeks ahead of normal. Man, we could use a big fat dose of global warming![Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/656100109386674176

realDonaldTrump (2015, December 08). Our country is facing a major threat from radical

    Islamic terrorism. We better get very smart, and very tough, FAST, before it is too late!

    [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump /status/674422386620502016

realDonaldTrump (2015, December 21). It's the Democrats' total weakness & incompetence that

    gave rise to ISIS -- not a tape of Donald Trump that was an admitted Hillary lie! [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/ 678992842468032513

realDonaldTrump (2015, December 22). Weak and low energy @JebBush, whose campaign is a

    disaster, is now doing ads against me where he tries to look like a tough guy. [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/ 679410900751802368

realDonaldTrump (2015, November 06). So sad that Obama rejected Keystone Pipeline.

    Thousands of jobs, good for the environment, no downside! [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/662717972981551104

realDonaldTrump (2016, February 28). While I hear the Koch brothers are in big financial

    trouble (oil), word is they have chosen little Marco Rubio, the lightweight from Florida

    [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/703904675289042945

realDonaldTrump (2016, March 21). Crooked Hillary Clintons foreign interventions unleashed

    ISIS in Syria, Iraq and Libya. She is reckless and dangerous! [Tweet]. https://twitter.com

    /realdonaldtrump/status/734066896794963968

realDonaldTrump (2016, March 24). N.A.T.O. is obsolete and must be changed to additionally

    focus on terrorism as well as some of the things it is currently focused on! [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/ status/712969068396093440

realDonaldTrump (2016, April 17). Crooked Hillary Clinton is spending a fortune on ads against

    me. I am the one person she doesn't want to run against. [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/

    realdonaldtrump/status/721695114943442946

realDonaldTrump (2016, April 30). The economy is bad and getting worse- almost ZERO

    growth this quarter. Nobody can beat me on the economy… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com

    /realdonaldtrump/status/726461507601612800

realDonaldTrump (2016, May 06). Crooked Hillary has ZERO leadership ability. As Bernie

    Sanders says, she has bad judgement. Constantly playing the women's card - it is sad!

    [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/728564631313190912

realDonaldTrump (2017, February 06). Any negative polls are fake news, just like the CNN,

    ABC, NBC polls in the election... [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/

    status/828574430800539648

realDonaldTrump (2017, February 16). The Democrats had to come up with a story as to why the

    lost the election, and so badly (306), so they made up a story… [Tweet]

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/832238070460186625

realDonaldTrump (2017, March 03). We should start an immediate investigation into

    @SenSchumer and his ties to Russia and Putin. A total hypocrite! [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/ realdonaldtrump/status/837722869106880517

realDonaldTrump (2017, March 28). Why doesn't Fake News talk about Podesta ties to Russia

    as covered by @FoxNews or money from Russia to Clinton… [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/ realdonaldtrump/status/846854703183020032

realDonaldTrump (2017, April 22). I am committed to keeping our air and water clean but
always remember that economic growth enhances environmental protection. Jobs matter!
https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/855901315305795584

realDonaldTrump (2017, May 16). As President I wanted to share with Russia (at an openly
scheduled W.H. meeting) which I have the absolute right to do, facts pertaining....
https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/864436162567471104

realDonaldTrump (2017, July 14). Sleazy Adam Schiff, the totally biased Congressman looking
into "Russia," spends all of his time on television pushing the Dem loss excuse! [Tweet].
https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/889473486506385409

realDonaldTrump (2017, July 24). The Fake News refuses to talk about how Big and how Strong
our BASE is. They show Fake Polls just like they report Fake News. Despite only
negative reporting, we are doing well - nobody is going to beat us. MAKE AMERICA
GREAT AGAIN! [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/
944927689638662145

realDonaldTrump (2017, November 29). The House of Representatives seeks contempt citations
(?) against the JusticeDepartment and the FBI… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/
realdonaldtrump/status/936037938898636800

realDonaldTrump (2017, December 28). In the East, it could be the COLDEST New Year's Eve
on record… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/946531657229701120

realDonaldTrump (2018, March 22). Crazy Joe Biden is trying to act like a tough guy. Actually,
he is weak, both mentally and physically.. [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump
/status/976765417908776963

realDonaldTrump (2018, June 04). As has been stated by numerous legal scholars, I have the

    absolute right to PARDON myself… https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/

    1003616210922147841

realDonaldTrump (2018, June 10). ...Germany pays 1% (slowly) of GDP towards NATO, while

    we pay 4% of a MUCH larger GDP. [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump

    /status/1005988633747312640

realDonaldTrump (2018, July 10). Many countries in NATO, which we are expected to defend,

    are not only short of their current commitment of 2%... [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/

    realdonaldtrump/status/1016729137409486853

realDonaldTrump (2018, August 06). California wildfires are being magnified & made so much

    worse by the bad environmental laws… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump

    /status/1026587142989008897

realDonaldTrump (2018, August 07). ... Supreme Court pick, economic enthusiasm, deregulation

    & so much more have driven the Trump base even closer together. Will never change!

    [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/894515865802223616

realDonaldTrump (2018, September 06). The Deep State and the Left, and their vehicle, the Fake

    News Media, are going crazy - & they don't know what to do… [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1037661562897682432

realDonaldTrump (2018, December 08). The Paris Agreement isn't working out so well for

    Paris. Protests and riots all over France… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/

    status/1071382401954267136

realDonaldTrump (2019, January 10). Cryin Chuck told his favorite lie when he used his

    standard sound bite that I "slammed the table & walked out of the room… [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1083353895030702080

realDonaldTrump (2019, January 18). Fake News is truly the ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!

    [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1086464467481833480

realDonaldTrump (2019, January 20). Be careful and try staying in your house. Large parts of

    the Country are suffering from tremendous amounts of snow and near record setting

    cold… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1086971499725160448

realDonaldTrump (2019, February 10). Well, it happened again. Amy Klobuchar announced that

    she is running for President, talking proudly of fighting global warming… [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1094718856197799936

realDonaldTrump (2019, March 16). How is the Paris Environmental Accord working out for

    France? After 18 weeks of rioting by the Yellow Vest Protestors… [Tweet].

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1107029377123057664

realDonaldTrump (2019, April 02). There is no amount of testimony or document production

    that can satisfy Jerry Nadler or Shifty Adam Schiff… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com

    /realdonaldtrump/status/1113062069551722496

realDonaldTrump (2019, April 13). I never offered Pardons to Homeland Security Officials,

    never ordered anyone to close our Southern Border…

    https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/ status/1117213859696267264

realDonaldTrump (2019, May 17). My Campaign for President was conclusively spied on.

Nothing like this has ever happened in American Politics… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/

realdonaldtrump/status/1129343742748569601

realDonaldTrump (2019, May 23). "Today, at the request and recommendation of the Attorney

General of the United States, President Donald J. Trump directed… [Tweet].

https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1131716322369392646

realDonaldTrump (2019, June 07). Nervous Nancy Pelosi is a disgrace to herself and her family

for having made such a disgusting statement… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/

realdonaldtrump /status/1137040971311353856

realDonaldTrump (2019, September 04). 6. The Democrats' destructive "environmental"

proposals will raise your energy bill and prices at the pump… [Tweet].

https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1169356704926109696

realDonaldTrump (2019, September 18) The Trump Administration is revoking California's

Federal Waiver… [Tweet]. https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/

1174342164039401472

realDonaldTrump (2019, September 30). The Fake News Media wants to stay as far away as

possible from the Ukraine and China deals made by the Bidens… [Tweet].

https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1178671715624394757

realDonaldTrump (2019, September 30). Rep. Adam Schiff illegally made up a FAKE & terrible

statement, pretended it to be mine as the most important part of my call… [Tweet].

https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1178643854737772545

realDonaldTrump (2019, October 03). As the President of the United States, I have an absolute

right, perhaps even a duty, to investigate, or have investigated, CORRUPTION…

https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1179925259417468928

realDonaldTrump (2019, October 04). As President I have an obligation to end CORRUPTION,

even if that means requesting the help of a foreign country or countries... [Tweet].

https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1180094411323117568

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